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Carson, Alexander, 1776-1844.
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proved to be erroneous:

THE

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

OF THE

Rev. DANIEL WILSON,
Rev. Dr PYE SMITH,
AND THE
Rev. Dr DICK,

PROVED TO BE ERRONEOUS;

WITH REMARKS

ON THE

CHRISTIAN OBSERVER, & ECLECTIC REVIEW.

BY

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PRINTED FOR W. WHYTE AND CO. EDINBURGH;
T. HAMILTON AND CO. LONDON;
W. CARSON, DUBLIN.

1830.

Printed by James Colston, East Rose Street,
Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

REVIEW, &c.

Of all the subjects that have lately come under discussion among Christians, that of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is doubtless the most important. The honour of Revelation, the comfort and edification of the believer, and the truth of the express statements of the Scriptures themselves, demand our belief that the Bible, as originally given, is DIVINE IN EVERY WORD.

That they who deny the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, should be anxious to free themselves from the incumbrance of the inspiration of the records that contain it, or which comes to the same thing, should modify the doctrine so as to destroy it, while they retain the word, is very natural. Accordingly, such writers, while they nominally acknowledge the inspiration of the Sacred Volume, have contrived to accompany the admission with so many exceptions, to modify the theory into such a variety of forms, and to load the subject with

so many distinctions, that with the utmost facility they can make every obnoxious passage bend to their purpose.

But that any real lover of the word of God, to whom it is sweeter than honey from the comb, and more precious than fine gold, and all the treasures of the earth, should in any measure give countenance to such profane and impious conduct, is most deeply to be deplored. Surely this is a thing most incongruous and inexcusable. Little, however, as this could have been anticipated, a number of writers have appeared professing the most evangelical sentiments, yet with a more than Socinian zeal, labouring to lower the inspiration of the book of God. Whether they are overawed by German neology, and flatter themselves that by giving up a part, they can more successfully retain the remainder; or whether they labour under such an obtuseness of intellect as to be unable to penetrate the alleged difficulties, and really to be convinced that the Scriptures themselves require such modifications of their inspiration, I shall not pretend to determine. Whatever may be the origin of such a sentiment, it is uncalled for by any of the phenomena of Scripture, without foundation in the word of God itself, and directly contrary to its most express statements.

The theory of Mr Wilson, as detailed in the XIIIth of his Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, is in words less shocking than that some time ago proposed by Dr. P. Smith, and the still more shocking system of the Ecclectic Review. Warned no doubt, by the reception of the extravagance of

those writers, Mr W. has proceeded more cautiously, and indeed has expressed himself so guardedly, and with so little developement of system, that it is difficult to determine exactly what he means. From his many full and explicit recognitions of inspiration, and from the want of detail or illustration in the exposition of the theory itself, it is difficult to convict him. We are rather obliged to interpret his meaning as a consequence, than we are enabled to refer to it in express statement. We must bring one part to bear upon another, in order to ascertain the extent of his doctrine. His theory is, that the Scriptures are partly human and partly divine: human in manner, divine in matter. The making of the Bible then has been a partnership business, in which God and man have had their distinct provinces. It is both human and divine, without mixture. Inspiration itself, he distinguishes, with many other writers on this subject, into four kinds or degrees, the inspiration of suggestion—of direction—of elevation—of superintendency.

My first observation on this theory of distinct divine and human parts in the Scriptures, is, that it is not demanded by the facts or phenomena on which he grounds its necessity. These phenomena are summed up at page 499. "In order to collect 'the phenomena on the other side," says the author, "let us open the New Testament again." Very well, Mr Wilson: this is without doubt the only way to settle the controversy. Open then the New Testament, and if it teaches your theory, I shall submit to it with the most profound respect.

What then have you found in the New Testament to support your doctrine? "We see," says the author, "on the very face of the whole, that the 'writers speak naturally, use the style, language, 'manner of address familiar to them." Demonstration, surely demonstration! The writers of the New Testament speak naturally, therefore their writings are partly human! So then in order to have had the Scriptures solely divine, the writers must have spoken unnaturally, or at least have avoided their natural manner. Is it then impossible for God to speak through men in their natural manner, without making the communication partly human? Could he not use their style and manner of address, as well as their mouth, or their pen, while both matter and words were his own? Even in the use of the peculiar style of each writer, there is inspiration. The writers are not *left*, as Mr Wilson supposes, to use their own style; it is a part of the divine wisdom to use this style, and the writers are as much under the influence of the Spirit in this, as in their conception of the most important doctrine. The Spirit of God uses the varied style of the writers. The writers are not left to themselves in this. The mould therefore is as much divine as the matter. When God speaks to man, he puts his thoughts and words into the form which is natural to those through whom he speaks. This serves many important purposes, of which not the least important is, that it serves as a touchstone to the dispositions of men with regard to Revelation. They who hate the truths

revealed, have, from this peculiarity of inspiration, a plausible pretence to deny inspiration altogether. They find in the Scriptures a variety of style, according to the number of the writers, and therefore ascribe all to man. This peculiarity serves also a valuable purpose with respect to Christians themselves. By affording a pretence for speculations and theories, it manifests the mournful fact, that even they who have been enlightened in the saving truth, have, in many other things, a large proportion of that worldly wisdom that savours not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.

" There are," continues our author, " peculiar ' casts of talents, expression, modes of reasoning in ' each author." True, very true. Yet this does not imply that there is one word in the whole volume, as originally written, which is not God's. Is it not God who has given to men this peculiarity of talents and modes of reasoning, and why could he not employ these in communicating his word?

" The language is that of the country and age ' where they live." How does this phenomenon bear upon the theory? " They employ all their fa- ' culties; they search, examine, weigh, reason, as ' holy and sincere men, in such a cause, might be ' supposed to do." Well, and in all these, may they not be inspired? Is it not possible for the Holy Spirit to convey his own thoughts, and his own words, through the *searching*, *examining*, *weighing*, *reasoning* of a man, as easily as if he spoke through a statue? The only thing that surprises me in all

this, is, that there should be any intellect to which this peculiarity of inspiration should, upon due consideration, present a difficulty on the supposition of the complete verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

" They use all their natural and acquired know-
' ledge." They use their knowledge both natural and acquired: But without doubt, they do not use all their own knowledge, whether natural or acquired. The Holy Spirit used as much of their knowledge, both natural and acquired, as was to his purpose. The natural and acquired knowledge of the writers of the Scriptures, so far as it is communicated in the divine word, is stamped with the same seal that impresses the discoveries of the character of God. I accept them as being as truly divine, as the gospel itself. " Their memory furnishes them
' with facts, or the documents and authentic records of
' the time are consulted by them for information." Very true; but they do not relate every fact that they retained in their memory, or that they knew from documents. Nor were they left to their own discretion, as to the facts to be related. The Holy Spirit gave them their selection of facts, and the words to record them. They were as truly inspired in relating what they saw, or in copying a genealogical table, if ever they copied one, as in revealing the way of salvation.

" They plead with those to whom they are sent,
' they address the heart, they expostulate, they
' warn, they invite." Is there any thing in all this, inconsistent with the complete verbal inspiration of

the Scriptures? Does this imply that the Scriptures are partly human? What is there to prevent the belief, that *these pleadings, these addresses to the heart, these expostulations, these warnings, these invitations*, are all inspired fully in matter and words? Was it impossible for the Holy Spirit to convey his pleadings, his addresses to the heart, his expostulations, his warnings, his invitations, by those of the inspired writers? What inconsistency is there in supposing that the Holy Spirit would convey his own exhortations, in the words of an exhortation from an apostle, as inspired by him? The only thing for which I am at a loss, is to conceive how a difficulty can be felt in this matter.

"The mind of man is working every where." Very true; the Holy Spirit speaks through man, not as he did through Balaam's ass, or as he might do through a statue, but as a rational instrument. But in all this working of the mind of man, there is nothing that is not truly God's.

"In the historical books, the Evangelists follow 'their own trains of recollection; they relate inci-'dents as they observe them, or were reported to 'them." In whatever way they were put in possession of the matter related, they relate every thing as given them by the Holy Ghost. "In the devo-'tional and epistolary books, again, natural talent, 'appropriate feelings and judgment, the peculiarities 'of the individual are manifest." Who ever doubted this? Such a peculiarity by no means implies that such compositions are partly human. It is quite consistent with the fact, that both matter and words are from God.

"Once more," says our author, "St Luke preserves 'his characteristic manner in the gospel and the Acts; 'St Paul is always the same; St John may be known 'in his several productions. Lastly, the prophetical 'parts are more elevated; and yet breathe the spi-'rit, and retain the particular phraseology of the 'writers. These are the phenomena on the other 'side; these are the parts of man."

Now that I might do the writer and my readers justice, I have quoted every line, and even every word of the account of the second class of phenomena. And what is the whole but one fact, one phenomenon, namely, that each of the inspired writers exhibits his own characteristic style and mode of reasoning, and makes use of knowledge which could have been possessed without inspiration! This fact might no doubt be illustrated, from Luke and Paul and John, and by a thousand references. Still it is but one fact, and a fact by no means even apparently contradictory to the passages asserting full inspiration. Mr Wilson then imposes on his careless reader, when he gives to the illustration of one phenomenon, the appearance of a collection of phenomena; and he grossly misinterprets that part which exhibits it as in any way contradictory to the entire inspiration of the Scriptures.

My second observation is, that Mr Wilson's two classes of phenomena, must either be reconciled on my plan, or they are not reconcilable at all. If there is any thing in the Scriptures merely human, if man has one part in such a sense that the same thing cannot be ascribed to God, then such a part is not in-

spired, and cannot in any sense be called God's word. If the Bible is a book partly human and partly divine, it cannot, as a whole, be the word of God, nor be justly ascribed to him as its sole author. Accordingly, if Mr Wilson's paradoxes are not explained on the view which I have given, they are real contradictions. "If every thing," says he, "is divine, 'how is it that we see every thing human?" Now, how is it that this paradox can be explained as a truth? How is it that any thing in the word of God can be said to be human? Only in the sense of having been written by man. But agreeable to the theory that God and man has each his distinct part in this composition, this paradox is a contradiction. If man has a part solely his own in the composition of the Bible, every thing in the Bible is not divine; if God has his part in this composition, every thing cannot be human. The paradox must be harmonized not by a thing that ascribes distinct parts to God, or the writers in the composition of the book; but by supposing that the Bible being the word of God, may in another point of view be ascribed to man as the instrument. In this sense, the epistle to the Romans may be called Paul's epistle, while it is the word of God in a higher sense; such a mode of speaking is common on all subjects. The king built the palace, the architect built the palace, and the masons built the palace. In this obvious light, we are to understand the passages that ascribe the different parts of the book of God to the writers of them. But this plain truth Mr Wilson has chosen to represent

as a paradox, and a paradox that from his explanation of it, must be a real contradiction. "The books," he says, "are human, and yet they are divine.—'They are the word of God, and yet they are the 'word of man." Now though in the above way, it is possible to explain this paradox in a harmless sense, yet that explanation is harsh, and not justified by the Scripture phraseology in which an epistle is ascribed to an Apostle. The latter mode of speaking is demanded by necessity, justified by use on every subject, and its meaning is obvious to a child. But the above paradoxes are not of this description; the books of Scripture are never by the Scriptures called *human*, they are never called the *word of man*. To call any thing *human* as contradistinguished from *divine*, as in this instance, is to deny that it is divine; to call any thing *the word of man* as contradistinguished from *the word of God*, is to deny that it is the word of God. Mr Wilson's phraseology then is not only paradoxical, but improper, and not paralleled by any instance of Scripture phraseology. However, as I am fully convinced that the author had a harmless meaning, I charge him with nothing more than an impropriety of expression. But it is an impropriety that should not be considered as trifling, for a just explanation of it, according to the use of language, must make it fully as shocking in him as it is in appearance. It is not to be justified on any principle to call the word of God either a *human* work, or the *work of man*.

But the support of his theory, will not suffer Mr Wilson's paradoxes to shelter themselves under this

mode of explanation. " The books are divine, and ' yet they are human,"—" they are the word of ' God, and yet the word of man." Now what are the grounds on which he asserts this? Not merely that the book inspired by God, was written by man, but that God and man are jointly the authors of this book, each having a distinct share. If so, the books are not all *divine*, nor all *human;* but partly *divine* and partly *human*, his theory then makes his paradoxes a contradiction.

That what Mr Wilson calls his second class of phenomena, must be considered in the light in which I have represented them, is clear from his own account of them, when he is reconciling them with the first class. When they are introduced to us for this purpose, they have the most innocent face imaginable, without the smallest appearance of an impudent intention to derogate from the honours of inspiration. " Instead of addressing us immediately," says the author, " God is pleased to use men as his ' instruments." Now what can have less appearance of contradiction to the inspiration of every word of Scripture than this. It is so silly to state it in this light, that it is almost silly to repeat it. " Instead of speaking to us severally by an inde- ' pendent revelation, he has consigned his will to ' us at once in the Holy Scriptures." Now can any one conceive a light in which this even appears to bear on the point in hand? As to inspiration, is it not the same thing whether God speaks to every individual by a distinct revelation, or whether he speaks to all in the same revelation? " Instead of making

'known that will," says Mr Wilson, "in the lan-
'guage of angels, or by the skill of poets and philo-
'sophers, he has been pleased to choose the unlet-
'tered Apostles and Evangelists." What has this to do with the subject of inspiration? How does this fact appear to contradict the passages that ascribe the Scriptures wholly to God? Why is this introduced as a fact to be reconciled with the first class of phenomena? Does the fact, that in the Scriptures God has not addressed us in the language of angels, appear to contradict the notion of their inspiration, either as to matter or manner? If God should speak to men in the language of angels, would the revelation be God's, in any sense, in which it is not His, as contained in the Scriptures? Had he spoken by the skill of poets and philosophers, would the manner have been divine, in any sense in which it is not now divine? Has he not given some parts of the Scriptures in the language of poetry? Are these more divine as to manner, than the parts written by the fishermen? "And," says Mr Wilson, "instead of using these as mere organic in-
'struments of his power, he has thought right to
'leave them to the operations of their own minds,
'and the dictates of their own knowledge, habits,
'and feelings, as to the manner of communicating
'his will." This is the only thing that can be said to have any reference to the subject at all; yet, if unexceptionably expressed, it would not have even the appearance of a contradiction to the phenomena of the first class. God did not *leave* the writers of Scripture to the operations of their own mind, &c.; but

he has employed the operations of their mind in his work. Here then we see, that in reconciling his two classes of phenomena, the writer exhibits the second class in the most harmless point of view, and it is only in his application of the system afterwards, that he gives them a different character. The light then in which the two classes of phenomena can be reconciled, is not a light in which they will bear the author's conclusions.

My third observation is, that the distinction between *matter* and *form*, as to their author, is a groundless figment, invented for the service of this theory. God is as much the author of the *manner* of the Scriptures, as of the *matter* of them; and the sense in which they may be said to be human in their manner, they may be said to be human in their matter. In what sense are they human in their manner? As they have been written by men, after the manner of human writing, with the style characteristic of those by whom they have been written. And has not the matter of these been the result of human thought, according to the operations of the mind, and with language occurring to the persons who were inspired to deliver them? The Scriptures are the thoughts and words of the writers, in the same sense in which they are in their style. It has pleased God to communicate his will in this way; so that divine truth is ushered into the world as the result of the operations of the human mind. Even the most glorious doctrines of revelation, are not an exception to this. If we find Paul's style, we find also Paul's gospel;

and his statements of truth, his arguments, &c. &c. are as much his, as his manner of writing. In the same sense that we can say, that the style is Paul's, we can also say, that the thoughts are Paul's. They are both Paul's in one point of view; in another, they are both God's. God, in conveying his truth, has used the intellectual operations, as well as the characteristic style of the writers whom he employed.

If this is the case with respect, even to the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, how much more evidently is it so with respect to those parts of Scripture that relate to things properly human. How much of the Scriptures are employed in relating the history of earthly things? Is not this human matter, as truly as it is related in human style? But though, in one sense, both in matter and manner, an historical event is human; in another, it is divine in both. This writer is still more inexcusable for such a distinction, since he seems to hold, that many things in Scripture needed only divine superintendency. Are not such things then, in every sense human; in matter as well as in manner? Besides, is it not as common to ascribe the matter of the Scripture to the writers of them, as to ascribe their manner? Do we not speak of Paul's Epistles? Is not the matter included in this appellation? This ascribes every thing in the Epistles of Paul, in one sense, to himself. We speak more frequently of Paul's thoughts, Paul's doctrine, Paul's reasoning, Paul's arguments, than we do of Paul's style. Yet the simplest peasant

never views this phraseology as inconsistent with his firm conviction of the full verbal inspiration of the whole Sacred volume. Such difficulties are only conjured up by the invention of theorists, to make void some part of the word of God, or to enlarge the field of critical investigation.

That a human style may, in another sense, be divine, may be made intelligible to a child by an illustration. Suppose, to give greater popularity to a work of genius, a writer should choose to imitate the style and manner of Sir Walter Scott; and that the imitation should be so perfect, that the public could not distinguish. Now, such a style would be, in one sense, the style of Sir Walter; but in another, it would be the style of the author. In like manner, the style of the Scriptures, is the characteristic style of the different writers, but God is the author of it. The style is as truly God's, as the matter; for if he has employed the style of different writers, he has likewise employed the expressions, thoughts, reasoning, and arguments of the different writers. In one sense, the Scriptures are all God's; in another, they are the writings of Moses and the Prophets, the Evangelists and the Apostles. The same writer, on different occasions, may employ different styles; and God has employed the characteristic style of each of the persons whom he inspired to deliver his oracles. If he has employed them as rational instruments with respect to style, he has likewise employed them as rational instruments with respect to thoughts, reasoning, arguments and words.

That the different styles of the writers of Scripture may, in a certain sense, be ascribed to God, is clear, even from the concession of the author. He admits, that the prophetic part of Scripture needed the inspiration of words; and that in this, as well as in the rest of the Scriptures, we have a characteristic style. If then we have the style of Isaiah, even when all the words with their collocation and syntax were chosen of God, is not the style his also? For what is style abstracted from the words that express it? The distinction, then, between the matter and manner of Scripture, as having a different author, is visionary and groundless.

My fourth observation is, that Mr Wilson's theory, both as to the distinction between matter and manner, and as to the different degrees of their operation, is utterly without foundation in the word of God itself. What can we know of this, or of any other subject of revelation, but as the Scriptures themselves teach us? But where do they teach these distinctions? What portion of the word of God asserts, that the matter and the manner of Scripture are to be ascribed to different authors? Where do they teach, that there are different kinds of inspiration? If no such doctrine is taught by the Scriptures, then it is one of the traditions of men, by which they, like the Pharisees, have made void the word of God. It deserves no respect. It is not necessary even to refute it; for to shew that the Scriptures do not teach such a thing, is to refute it. The Scriptures declare, that they are the inspired word of God; but

in the whole Sacred Volume, there is not a hint, that they are inspired in a different sense, or in a different degree. The man, therefore, who invents a theory, that ascribes to Scripture different kinds of inspiration, is as inexcusable, as the man who, in explaining the account of the creation, asserts that the earth was an old planet repaired, or a splinter from the sun. Where have our theorists found, that inspiration is divided into suggestion, direction, elevation, and superintendency? Where the Pharisees found that it was a sin to eat with unwashen hands.

But let us not too hastily make assertions Let us hear what Mr Wilson alleges : " By refer-' ring to the language of the Apostles, as quot-' ed in our last lecture, we shall find that the ' divine inspiration was extended to every part ' of the canonical writings, in proportion as each ' part stood related to the religion," 505. *The language of the Apostles.*—I do not wish a better authority. The language of the Apostles teach such a doctrine! Where, Mr Wilson? You have quoted no such passage. " Whatever weight the ' different parts of the Sacred edifice were intended ' to sustain, a correspondent strength of inspiration ' was placed, as it were, at the foundation." Fine, very fine; and is demonstration itself more convincing? What can be more certain, than that the different parts of a building ought to have a strength proportional to the weight which they are intended to bear? Unluckily it happens, that there is a small flaw in the figure. It has not the smallest

reference to the subject which it is brought to illustrate. The different truths of revelation have a different degree of importance, which might be well illustrated by this truly beautiful figure. But it requires as much inspiration to tell what o'clock it is by inspiration, as to reveal the gospel itself. If all Scripture is given by inspiration, the reference to Paul's cloak requires as much inspiration, as those passages that declare the way of salvation. The question is not, whether many things in Scripture might have been known without inspiration, as there are unquestionably others that could not at all have been otherwise known: But the question is, whether the most trivial thing said to be inspired, can be inspired in any other sense than things of utmost moment. As long as it stands recorded, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," so long the honour of revelation is as much concerned in the inspiration of an incidental allusion, as in that of the most fundamental truth.

In the following extract, the author gives us a specification of different things that require a different extent of inspiration, but which have no reference to the subject at all. "Sometimes," says he, "we read of divine messages by visions, 'dreams, angelic voices; at other times the Al-'mighty appears to have revealed truth immediate-'ly to the minds of the Apostles." Now, had the author proposed to point out the different ways in which revelation was given, this would have been to his purpose. But it has no relation to the extent of inspiration. Whether a thing were revealed

by a vision, dream, or angelic voice; or without any intervention, the degree of inspiration is the same. "Sometimes," he continues, "the sacred 'writers were wrapt in the overpowering com-'munications of the spirit. At other times, and 'as the matter varied, their memory was fortified 'to recal the Saviour's life, doctrines, miracles, 'parables, discourses." Had Paul been permitted to relate what he saw in the third heavens, the extent of the inspiration of his account of the matter, would not have been greater than when he relates his own history. If his account of the latter be a part of the Scriptures, it is given by the inspiration of God; and therefore is God's both in matter and words. Who told Mr Wilson, that in the account of the Saviour's life, doctrines, miracles, parables, discourses, the memory of the Apostles was merely fortified? Has he got any new message from heaven? Perhaps it will be said, this was all that was necessary; this would be arrogance in an angel, and would deliver him into chains of darkness to be reserved for the judgment of the great day. Vain men will be wise! who can tell what is necessary on such a subject, but God only? Who dare make distinctions, where God has made none? God has said, "All Scripture 'is given by inspiration of God," without any hint of different degrees of inspiration. Who then dare say that one part of Scripture is less inspired than another? besides, a man's memory might be so fortified, that he could remember every fact

and circumstance with the utmost exactness, he might be able to relate every thing that ever he heard, with every word in its proper place; and after all, be unfit for writing any of the gospels. Were an illiterate man to be put in possession of every fact in Gibbons' History, would he be fit to write the decline and fall of the Roman Empire? Such a man will have full as much need of words as of ideas. Much more in the history of Christ, must an inspired writer have all the matter and all the words. None but the Holy Spirit can judge what is to be expressed, and what is to be omitted; and in what phraseology it can be most suitably exhibited. When an inspired writer gives us an account of his own feelings, we depend not on either his knowledge, or expression. Though he speaks concerning what is most intimately known to him, he speaks the things of God, in the words of God. "In a different matter," continues Mr Wilson, "an author accompanies 'St Paul, and records what he saw and heard. 'Again, an Apostle hears of dissentions in the 'churches, and is moved by the blessed spirit 'to write to them, to denounce judgments, to 'prescribe a course of conduct. At other times, 'he enters upon a series of divine argument; 'delivers in order the truths of the gospel, or 'expounds the figurative economy of Moses." Very true, very true. But in all these things there is but one kind of inspiration. All this is called the word of God, and is said to be given by inspiration; and therefore in matter and words must be

God's. Do the Scriptures any where speak of these things as being differently inspired? not one word of all this is in the least to the purpose.

The author does not pretend to determine the extent of inspiration in each of these cases, but he says, "we infer from the uniform language of the 'New Testament, that in each case such assis-'tance, and only such assistance was afforded, as 'the emergencies of it required." Now, as I set as much value upon a legitimate inference from the word of God, as I do an express declaration, I have a great curiosity to hear what is this uniform language of the New Testament, from which such a limitation and distinction of inspiration are inferred. In no copy of the New Testament that ever happened to fall into any hands, is there the slightest hint on the subject.

But after declaring that it is neither needful nor possible to determine the extent of inspiration in each case, the author gives us a most edifying page, in an attempt to draw that line which it is neither needful nor possible to draw. I have heard of a divine who in one head of discourse, proposed to speak of the revealed glories of heaven; and in another the unrevealed glories of heaven. Surely Mr Wilson's intrepid attempt to do what is neither needful nor possible, manifests equal theological heroism. "The prophetical parts, the doctrines 'of pure revelation, the historical facts beyond 'the reach of human knowledge, all the great out-'lines of Christianity, both as to doctrine and 'practice, were probably of the inspiration of sug-

'gestion, both as to the matter and the words, '(for we think in words.) Where the usual 'means of information, or the efforts of memory 'were enough, as in most of the gospels and acts, 'the inspiration of direction may be supposed to 'have sufficed. Where the exposition of duty, 'or the rebuke of error, or exhortation to growth 'in grace, was the subject, the inspiration of ele-'vation and strength may be considered as afforded. 'When matters more incidental occur, the inspira-'tion, still lessening with the necessity, was 'probably that of superintendency only, preserving 'from all improprieties which might diminish the 'effect of the whole, and providing for inferior, 'but not unimportant points of instruction. Even 'the slightest allusions to proverbial sayings, to 'the works of nature, to history, were possibly 'not entirely out of the range of the watchful 'guardianship of the Holy Spirit." Here is a lamentable specimen of the folly and arrogance of the wisdom of man in the things of God. This grave evangelical divine parcels out the Scriptures according as he fancies that they are more or less the word of God; and pronounces his opinions on subjects which he himself confesses are untaught in the Scriptures. This is the worst species of novel-writing; for it substitutes the baseless probabilities, and visionary suppositions of man, for the dictates of the Holy Spirit. It pretends to give us information on a point of which it is admitted, we are not informed by the word of God. What sort of instruction then can this be? What sort of

a mind is it that can derive edification from it? Just that sort of mind that receives for doctrines the commandments of men. In the things of God the Christian should know nothing but what God has revealed. To say that this is a foolish and untaught question, would not be enough, because it is contrary to what is expressly taught; namely, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Mr Wilson has here given us an apocrypha to the New Testament; and like the apocrypha added to the Old Testament, it contradicts the inspired records. How could we say that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, if it is merely *possible* that some things in them are not *entirely* out of the range of the watchful guardianship of the Holy Spirit? Is the Christian then to be sent to his Bible to decide how far each of its parts is inspired? If he is set loose from the authority of the divine declaration that asserts the inspiration of the whole equally, will Mr Wilson's *possibly* be an anchor to him, when his passions, or his interests urge him? If Mr Wilson by his own authority decides, that inspiration *possibly* extends so far, others by a like authority may decide that *possibly* it does not go so far. Though I should displease all the evangelical ministers of London, and of Europe, I will express my utter abhorrence of sentiments so dishonourable to the word of my Lord, so injurious to the edification of Christians, so destructive to the souls of men.

My fifth observation is, that this distinction of inspiration is an ungodly attempt to explain away the

thing, and retain the word. In fact, not one of the divisions is inspiration, but the first. Direction is not inspiration, elevation is not inspiration, superintendency is not inspiration. Do not all the evangelical ministers of London claim these three? Do they not constantly pray for them? Do they not ask direction from God in their teaching? Are they not sometimes elevated above the power of nature? Do they not speak of divine superintendency in their places of worship? But were I to assert from this, that Mr Wilson pretends to be inspired, I would represent him as a fanatic; and my representation would be a calumny, not justified by his pretensions to divine *direction*, *elevation*, and *superintendency*. If then, the Scriptures are in many things the work of man merely *directed*, *elevated*, and *superintended* by God, it is a falsehood to say, that they are all inspired. Since then, the Scriptures assert, that they are all given by inspiration, he who asserts, that much of them is only the work of men, *directed*, *elevated*, and *superintended* by God, gives the lie to the Holy Spirit, and calumniates the Scriptures. This is a serious charge, and I charge it on Mr Wilson, and those writers who have used this wicked theory of inspiration. By this jesuitical artifice, we may both admit and deny any thing. We have nothing to do but in our explanation to subject the word to an analysis, not directed by its use, but by our own fancies, or the necessities of our system, and the work is accomplished.

My sixth observation is, that if this distinction of inspiration is true, the greatest part of the Bible is

not the word of God at all. When a pupil writes a theme by the direction of his teacher, with every help usually afforded; and when it is so corrected by the latter, that nothing remains but what is proper in his estimation, is it not still the pupil's production? Could it be said to be the composition, or the work of the teacher? No more can the Scriptures be called the word of God, according to this mischievous theory. A book might all be true, and good, and important, yet not be the book of God. To be God's book, it must be his, in matter and in words, in substance and in form.

My seventh observation is, that the author seems to admit the dangerous position, that some things delivered by the inspired writers, may not belong to the revelation; and that speaking on subjects not of a religious nature, they may have erred. This blasphemy has been openly avowed by some writers, and Mr Wilson certainly avows it, as a last resource, in case of necessity, but does not actually in any instance avail himself of its aid. To shew that I am justified in ascribing this sentiment to him, I will quote his language, on which I found my charge. "How far the inspiration of the 'Scriptures extends to the most casual and remote 'allusions of an historical and philosophical kind, 'which affect in no way the doctrines or duties of 'religion, it is not, perhaps, difficult to determine." Does not this seem to betray a fear, that history and philosophy may detect something false in the Scriptures, for which the author good naturally provides, by supposing that such things do not af-

fect the doctrines and duties of religion. God asserts most expressly, that " All Scripture is given ' by inspiration;" but history and philosophy may find some falsehoods in it. Mr Wilson, in this critical situation, most generously steps forward and excuses them, by alleging that they do not affect the doctrines or the duties of religion. Would Mr Wilson take it kindly, if any one should attempt a like apology for himself? Would a jury look on it as no invalidation of evidence, that the witness is proved to have uttered many falsehoods on his oath, though not bearing on the question at issue? Would they not utterly discredit his whole testimony, if they found a known falsehood in his evidence, even on the most unconnected matters that are usually brought forward in cross-examination? If God avows the whole Scriptures as his word, a falsehood as to any thing will affect the revelation. The Bible must not utter a philosophical lie, nor an historical lie, more than a religious lie. If it lies on one subject, who will believe it on another! If it lies as to earthly things, who will believe it about heavenly things? But Mr Wilson asserts, that " The claims of the sacred penmen to an unerring ' guidance, are, without exception, confined to the ' revelation itself." God's assertion of inspiration extends to every thing that can be called Scripture. " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Even the sayings of wicked men and of devils are recorded by inspiration, as truly as the sayings of Christ himself. There is nothing in Scripture that does not belong to the revelation. What an infi-

del invention is this, that suggests a distinction in the book of God, between things that belong to the revelation, and things that do not belong to it! If even our evangelical divines will except from inspiration some things under the denomination of history and philosophy, not affecting the religion; what may not be expected from the daring profaneness of those who hate the gospel, and are willing to carry the theory to its utmost limits? If Mr Wilson is allowed to charge an historical, or a philosophical falsehood on the penmen of Scripture, may not Dr Priestley be allowed to charge inconclusive reasoning on an epistle? The Bible then, it seems, is not all the word of God: only so much of it deserves that title, as affects the doctrines and the duties of religion. This accounts very obviously for the conduct of some evangelical divines, with respect to the circulation of the Apocrypha intermingled with the Scriptures. If they have found that all the Scriptures do not themselves belong to the revelation of God, it is not surprising if they add a little more to them, to make them more palatable to the world.

But, observes Mr Wilson, "The Bible was not 'given us to make us poets, or orators, or historians, 'or natural philosophers." Very true, very true, but very silly. We must overlook the bad poetry and bad oratory of the Bible, if we find any of this description in it; and we have no reason to expect a complete history of human affairs, nor a system of natural philosophy. But, verily, if the Scriptures contained one rule of poetry or oratory, that rule must be a legitimate one, or the Bible is a for-

gery. And if it tells one historical untruth, it must forfeit its pretensions in every thing, seeing its pretensions extend to every thing in the book. The inspired writers may have been as ignorant of natural philosophy, as the most ignorant of British peasants, without affecting their inspiration. But, verily, if they have delivered one philosophical dogma, it must either be true, or the Scriptures as a whole are false. For my part, I am convinced that to look into the Scriptures for a system of philosophy, is utterly to degrade them. But it would degrade them much more, it would utterly blast their pretensions, to allege that they have attempted and failed. I must have the inspired writers cleared of the accusation of pledging themselves to a philosophical untruth, as well as to a religious untruth. If the Scriptures are not designed to command our faith on points of philosophy, they do not teach any thing on the subject. How very derogatory then to the honour of inspiration, is the following conclusion:—"Many things which such 'persons,' (namely poets, orators, historians, and natural philosophers,) "might think inaccurate, 'may consist with a complete religious inspiration." How can this be the case, Mr Wilson, when it is said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration?" This pledges God equally for every thing in the Bible. Mr Wilson's assertion gives the lie to God's declaration. God says "All Scripture is given by in-'spiration;" Mr Wilson says it is false,—only so much of the Scripture is given by inspiration, as belongs to the revelation. This blasphemous doctrine

teaches Christians to go through the Scriptures, separating what belongs to revelation from what does not belong to revelation, to distinguish what is true from what may be false. Could Satan broach a worse doctrine in the school of Christ? Impossible. It would not be so mischievous, if in the boldness of infidelity, he were to assert through his agents, that the Scriptures are not at all inspired. This would be too shocking. From this all Christians would start back with horror. But when, as an angel of light, he asserts through the pen of an evangelical minister, that some falsehoods in Scripture are not only consistent with the most complete religious inspiration, but that this is the strongest ground on which it is possible to vindicate inspiration, he is likely to infuse his poison into the soul of many simple and unwary disciples of Christ.

But in the very phraseology of this exceptionable sentiment, there is a management which, to say the least, does not savour of godly sincerity. *Such persons might think inaccurate.* Was the author ashamed in plain language to make the wicked assertion? His meaning must be that such things are really inaccurate. This is the only point of view in which the assertion is to his purpose. Why then does he falter? Does he think that this soft way of charging God with falsehood, will excuse the daringness of the crime? Was it caution, or was it conscience, that induced him to utter the horrible blasphemy, as the sentiment of others?

And what artifice appears in the association of falsehoods in history and philosophy, with critical

faults in poetry and oratory! Are errors in fact to be ranged with errors in rhetorick? Is it the same thing in morals to be a liar and a bad poet? Is the poetry, to which just taste has never made an exception, to be brought into question, merely for the sake of softening delinquencies as to truth?

The author next gives us a quotation from Bishop Horseley, that shews that this truly great scholar did not know well what to say on this subject. He admits, yet is unwilling to make the supposition. As usual, when a writer is in a cloud, he has parenthesis upon parenthesis, and says more than enough on things nothing to the purpose; while he still leaves the question as he found it. I shall give the extract:—"It is most certain," says Horseley, 'that a divine revelation—in other words, a disco-'very of some part of God's own knowledge made 'by God himself—must be perfectly free from all 'mixture of human ignorance and error, in the par-'ticular subject in which the discovery is made." Well then, my good Bishop, must not this apply to the motion or rest of the earth, if it is really taught, as well as to the character of God? "The discovery 'may," he continues, "and unless the powers of 'the human mind were infinite, it cannot but be li-'mited and partial, but as far as it extends, it must 'be accurate." All true, but all away from the mark. No man ever felt a difficulty on this point. This is not debated by either infidel or Christian; by either the friends of plenary inspiration, or the abettors of partial inspiration. "In whatever re-'lates, therefore," he continues, "to religion, either

'in theory or practice, the knowledge of the sacred 'writers was infallible, or their inspiration was a 'mere pretence." And must not their inspiration be a mere pretence, if there is any thing delivered by them, which is not inspired; since they assert of all Scripture that it is given by inspiration? Where is the distinction to be found between religion, and things supposed not to be religious?

"Though I admit," continues the Bishop, "the 'possibility of an inspired teacher's error of 'opinion in subjects which he is not sent to 'teach." But is he not sent to teach every thing that he has taught? If he gives us a bad lesson in philosophy, it will condemn him, as well as if he had given us bad morality. If he was not sent to teach us philosophy, let him keep his philosophy to himself. There must be none of it in the Scriptures. But he in a parenthesis, gives us an irrefragable reason for this; "(because inspiration is not omni-'science, and some things there must be which it 'will leave untaught.)" This might be very much to the purpose, if the opponent was so very unreasonable as to insist that the Bible, to be an inspired book, must teach philosophy, yea, that a divine teacher must be omniscient, and leave nothing untaught. But of what use is it, with respect to the man who charges false philosophical dogmas, as taught by the Scriptures? There is a mighty difference between refusing to speak, and speaking a falsehood. It is, however, with great reluctance, that this learned bishop goes so far. For he adds, "yet I confess it appears to me no very probable 'supposition (and it is, as I conceive, a mere sup-

' position, not yet confirmed by any one clear in-
' stance,) that an inspired writer should be permitted,
' in his religious discourses, to affirm a false propo-
' sition on *any* subject, or in *any* history to misre-
' present a fact." Here the bishop is almost, though not altogether, such as he should be. This indeed is a very important thing. But if the learned writer had considered the matter in the view of the direct assertion of the inspiration of *all* Scripture, there can be no doubt that he would have taken higher ground. If it is only a supposition, a supposition not demanded by any one clear instance, why should the wicked supposition be made? Especially since it is true, as the bishop adds, "Their language, too, notwithstanding the accommo-
' dation of it that might be expected for the sake of
' the vulgar, to the notions of the vulgar, is, I believe,
' far more accurate, more philosophically accurate in
' its allusions than is generally imagined." Indeed the language referred to, can scarcely be called an accommodation to the prejudices of the vulgar, but is rather a speaking in the usual way of men, without excepting philosophers themselves. If the sun and the moon are said to have stood still in the time of Joshua, there is no philosophical sentiment expressed, more than when the philosopher himself now speaks of the rising and the setting of the sun. There is not the smallest difficulty thrown on the subject from this quarter. It is only foolish divines who wish to have employment for their learning and ingenuity, that contrive difficulties to be resolved by theoretical explanations. Mr Wilson

himself, after quoting the bishop's words, seems to feel a little contrition for his previous language, and makes a strong effort to reconcile his views with those of this luminary of his church. "Perhaps," says he, "it is therefore better, and more consistent 'with all the Scripture language, to say, that the 'inspiration of superintendance, reached even to 'the least circumstances and most casual allusions 'of the sacred writers, in the proportion which 'each bare to the revelation itself." There is a happy obscurity in this qualification, which, if it prevents us from using it to advantage, also serves to screen it from exposure. But if certain errors in Scripture are reconcilable with the doctrine of complete religious inspiration, how is it better to say the contrary? Are we on this subject to say and suppose whatever fits our theories? My way is to endeavour to find what the Scriptures say, and to this I make every human dogma to bend. I will not allow philosophy herself to prate on the things of God. She is august in her own territories, but let her die should she dare to invade the territories of revelation. On this holy ground her profane foot must not tread.

But after our author doubtfully consents, that inspiration may extend to the least circumstances, which, in his estimation, is more than is necessary, he gives two reasons for his opinion, which are almost as little satisfactory to me as unbelief itself. Why does Mr Wilson believe, that inspiration is thus extensive? Is it because the Scriptures themselves say so, which are the only authority on the

subject? No, truly; this is not the ground on which he rests the matter. His two reasons are, that philosophy has no objection to this view, and that practical uses may be derived from the slightest details, and most apparently indifferent circumstances. Now, there can be no doubt, that divine truth must be perfectly consistent with true knowledge of every kind, and must have some use; but it is equally true, that this is not a proper criterion for judging of the contents of Scripture. A thing may be consistent with all other knowledge, and may have practical uses, yet not be a part of divine revelation. Had I, then, no other reason for the inspiration of the passages referred to, I would not believe it. That Paul was inspired in directing Timothy to bring his cloak, I believe, because this is a part of Scripture, and the Scriptures inform me, that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Mr Wilson believes Paul to be inspired in this direction, because he fancies it is not destitute of practical use. I believe it to have practical use, because it is the words of inspiration. If it is not inspired, because it is a part of Scripture, it is impossible to know that it is inspired; and it is mere fanaticism to deduce instruction from it. Even then, when Mr Wilson holds the truth on this subject, he does not hold it on its proper evidence; and, therefore, does not truly hold it at all. This, to some may appear a trifling consideration. But it is a thing, on every part of divine truth, of primary importance. We must believe God without a voucher. On hearing a traveller relate some

wonderful fact, if we should hesitate to believe him, till some other gentleman should interpose the authority of his experience, would the narrator be satisfied with our credence? Would he not consider himself most grossly insulted? And is it not perfectly the same thing, when we believe the inspiration of the direction about the cloak and parchments, and the prescription to Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake, not because these are parts of Scripture, and that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" but because some evangelical divine can extract edification for us from these portions of the word of God? A passage may contain instruction, yet we may be unable to see it. Are we then to hesitate about its inspiration till we can find the looked for edification? Does not this warrant the denial of the most important truths of the gospel, when individuals cannot perceive their advantage? Does not this justify the Neologian in explaining away all the miracles of Christ? To rest the foundation of the inspiration of particular passages of Scripture, upon any other foundation, than that they are a part of Scripture, is in effect to overturn the inspiration of the whole Bible.

I am glad, however, that Mr Wilson can perceive several important instructions in those passages of Scripture, which have been perfectly barren in the estimation of some other evangelical theologians, strutting in awkward dignity with the staff and gown of the philosopher. Yes, some of these oracles of orthodoxy, to whom the religious world are accustomed to look up as almost the mouth of hea-

ven, have not been ashamed to avow the opinions that such passages as the above, are not the words of God. Such things as these are too unimportant, too destitute of interest, too little of a religious nature, to be the dictation of inspiration. Hence the theory that makes a distinction in the Scriptures between the things that belong to religion, and the things of another nature. Wretched ingenuity! if thou must be employed, go to the schools of philosophy, where thou wilt find kindred madmen; leave the word of God in an unadulterated state to the christian. How daring, how diabolically daring, to erect a standard to displace some parts of Scripture from the word of God? Who but God has a right to say, what is worthy of revelation?

Mr Wilson, like many other divines, assigns to philosophy, a dignity and an authority on this subject, which I cannot recognise. In her own province, she is an instructor most interesting and useful; but on the subject of revealed religion her prerogatives are very limited. No philosophical doctrine, or discovery in philosophy, can be admitted as testimony with respect to the claims of a religion pretending to an establishment on miracles, but that which is either self-evident, or is legitimately deduced from self-evident principles. Such a philosophy has a right to speak, and must be heard, on all subjects. But little, indeed, of that which is called philosophy is of this description. Romances assuming the name of philosophy, have spoken as umpires on the truth of the doctrines of

revelation; and unwary christians, either not knowing the limits of philosophical interference, or from an undue deference to the dignity of science, have tamely acquiesced in the assumed claims. As a matter of fact, no madmen have been so extravagant as pretended philosophers. The inmates of Bedlam are quite sane in comparison with the metaphysical lunatics, who, in the building of ingenious systems, have trampled upon all the laws of evidence, and all the fundamental principles of the human mind. And if the geological maniacs, who have indicated their paroxysms in the effusion of systems of the formation of the earth, are at all to be paralleled, it is in the ingenious but frantic labours of those divines, who have employed themselves in theories about the manner of the formation of the word of God.

"——————— Ah! foolish sage
He could not trust the word of heaven,
The light which from the Bible blazed—that lamp
Which God threw from his palace down to earth,
To guide his wandering children home—yet leaned
His cautious faith on speculations wild,
And visionary theories absurd,
Compared with which the most erroneous flight
That poet ever took when warmed with wine
Was moderate conjecturing."

POLLOK.

The phases of philosophy have been as changeable as those of the moon; yet, in every age, the pulpit has generally conformed to the reigning systems of science, and has been made the echo of the schools.

Speculation assumes the place of axioms, and the Apostles of Jesus must bow to the successors of the Stagirite.

Even the real discoveries of science are not founded on evidence that will warrant them to dictate to the sense of revelation, even on the points in which they relate to the same subject. I am convinced, that the glory of God has been much displayed by the glasses of the astronomers. But if Moses and the telescope were at issue, I would trample on the glasses of the philosophers. I have more evidence that the Scriptures are the word of God, than ever can be produced for the truth even of the Newtonian system. This, I say, not from any opinion of interference, for I am persuaded there is none. The Scriptures are not pledged for or against this system. But the usual way of speaking on this subject, discovers too little respect for the word of God, and too much deference to the authority of philosophy. Mr Wilson does not seem free of this charge. "There is," says he, "nothing in them (the Scriptures) inconsistent 'with the facts and discoveries of history and phi-'losophy." Very true, and so much the better for history and philosophy. But is there any fact in history so well established as the history of Jesus? We would not be justified in condemning the Scriptures, though many things were found in history contrary to their accounts. Who has given to profane history the prerogative of credence, as often as it might differ from sacred history? It is much better that there is no such difference; but

it is not right to acknowledge even in theory, that in a contested matter, the preference is to be given to the word of man. If the king and his prime minister make a contradictory assertion, I will believe his Majesty: Shall I then give less deference to my God? I shall never consent, that the Scriptures shall give the way in passing, to the arrogant systems of human philosophy.

There are, no doubt, errors on both sides. If some are willing to hold the Scripture from philosophy as their liege lord, others set too small a value on the testimony of that light which belongs to man by his constitution. Whatever is self-evident, ought to be accounted as a revelation from God; and consequently a revelation prior to that of the Scriptures. Any thing, therefore, that contradicts any of the fundamental principles of human nature, must be rejected, whatever its claims may be. A dogma at variance with any self-evident truth, cannot be contained in the Bible. The light of nature is a divine revelation, and no succeeding revelation can contradict it.

My eighth observation is, that little as this theory may profess to deduct from the full inspiration of Scripture; though in some instances the author reduces the distinction to a mere shadow; yet if there is really any thing in Scripture which is human in such a sense, that it is not also divine, the scheme as truly contradicts these passages of Scripture which assert inspiration, as the most lax system on this subject. If man had a part to perform in such a sense, that in it God had no share, which

is the only sense in which the distinction is to the author's purpose, so far the Scriptures are not the inspired word of God. They are not wholly by inspiration, which as truly contradicts the assertion that "all Scripture is given by inspiration," as the doctrine that inspiration extends to a few general objects only. Why do we believe that the Scriptures are inspired? Because they assert this. If then we are justified in making any exception from this, we are equally justified in making any number of exceptions. This theory then, though it makes a distinction which the author sometimes represents to be so fine, that it is difficult or impossible to perceive it, in reality subverts inspiration.

My ninth observation is, that this theory is destitute of foundation, even according to the author's own explanations. He teaches, that though the writers of Scripture made use of their own knowledge, their own information, &c. &c. yet, that in the use of those they were directed, or superintended by God, so that the thing written may in his view, be said to be inspired. Now admitting this, for the sake of argument, why may not the human manner be equally directed, and superintended, and elevated; so that it may also be said to be divine? Is the manner more human than, according to the author, much of the matter? If then the human matter, may be called the word of God, because of God's direction or superintendency, why may not the human manner be called God's in a like sense? May not the form be inspired in the sense of direction or superintendence, as well as the things

which are said to have this kind of inspiration? If so, why is the manner said to be exclusively human, more than much of the matter, which according to the author himself, is equally human? The author himself then has taken away the foundation from his own theory.

My tenth observation is, that this theory has not the redeeming circumstance in it, that the most lax systems of inspiration possess, namely, an adaptation to answer objections. It does not remove a single difficulty, that is supposed to press on complete verbal inspiration. It cannot be of the smallest service in forming a harmony of the gospels. If all the matter of the Scriptures is God's, the humanity of the mere manner cannot reconcile the smallest seeming contradiction. Some theorists may plead, that their systems are demanded by the necessities of the case, but this theory sins without this temptation. Its advantages are merely in the fancy of its author. But the author's pretensions on this head, we shall afterwards have an opportunity of more fully examining.

My eleventh observation is, that though there is a distinction between the matter and manner of a book, yet there is no distinction between the author of a book, and the author of the style, or manner of a book. He that is the author of a book, must be the author of the style of the book. Now God is said to be the author of the Bible, not merely the author of the matter of the Bible. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." It is the Scripture then that is given by inspiration, and this word contains the manner as well as the matter; the words as well as the

thoughts. A writing includes thought, words, style; and as all the holy writings are expressly declared to be inspired, they must be inspired in thoughts, words, style. One man may suggest the thoughts contained in any composition, and another may express them in his own manner; but we never say, that one man is the author of a writing or composition, and another the author of the style of the composition, for the word writing or composition includes the style. Were any piece of writing produced in a civil court, as the production of a certain person, how ridiculous would be an attempt to prove that another was the author of the style of it. It might indeed be written in the style of another, that is, in the same kind of style which another uses, but the author of the writing must be the author of the style. Just so with the Scriptures. They are written by the inspiration of God, but that inspiration has conformed itself to the variety of styles used by the writers of Scripture. To say, that the Scriptures are the work of God, but their style the work of man, is the same thing as to contend that the expression *God made man*, admits the supposition, that the devil formed him. The word *Scripture*, as expressly includes style, as the word *made* includes formation.

The same thing is evident from other designations of the Scripture. The phrase *word of God*, implies that the Scriptures are God's, in both matter and expression. The word λογος* denotes not only a word, but a connection of words, expressing a thought, or a whole speech, oration, or treatise.

* See Appendix.

It is very variously used, but whether it is employed to denote a word, a sentence, or a speech, it always includes style. Indeed it is distinguished by Demosthenes from ῥημα, signifying a single word. In his oration for the crown, he says of Æschines, συνειλεχως ῥηματα και λογους, translated by Dr Leland, *his words and periods are prepared.* If then the whole Scriptures are called the *word of God,* they must be his in words, as well as in matter, in style as well as in sentiment.

The same thing appears from the designation *oracles of God.* Among the heathens, the word oracle denoted the response given by the god, who was consulted through his priest. This answer was supposed to come from the god, both in matter and form. The priestess of Apollo at Delphi was in a phrenzy, whilst she uttered the words inspired by her god. In general, the heathen prophets were fitted for being channels of communicating the divine declarations by previous derangement. It was then undoubtedly understood, that the inspiring deity was the author of the words and style, as well as of the substance of the communication. The Scriptures then are said to be the *oracles of God,* and Stephen says, that Moses *received the lively oracles.* If so, he received the whole that he wrote. Indeed, Mr Wilson admits what refutes himself. " The prophetical parts," he says, " the doctrines ' of pure revelation, the historical facts beyond the ' reach of human knowledge; all the great outlines ' of Christianity, both as to matter, doctrine, and ' practice, were probably of the inspiration of sug-

' gestion, both as to the matter and the words," 507. If so, the style in all such cases is God's, the manner as well as the matter. For if all the words are given by God, how can the style be abstracted from this? Indeed, in prophecy not understood by the writer, the words and the collocation of the words, needed inspiration as much as the matter. The Scriptures then, soul, body, and spirit, are the word of God.

My last observation is, that Mr Wilson's system is crude and indigested, and fertile in contradictions above any other theory. It does not hang together, but obliges him to harmonise its discordant parts by saying and unsaying, in the most extravagant manner. The theory essentially consists in supposing that in the making of the Scriptures, God is the author of one part, and man of another. The matter being divine and the form human; yet he frequently asserts that the whole is divine, and the whole human. Now the ingenuity of Satan could not reconcile this on Mr Wilson's plan. A thing may be both divine and human in different points of view, but in the same point of view this is impossible. Now to say that the Scriptures are divine and human in different points of view, is nothing to Mr Wilson's purpose. In this sense, the matter may be said to be human as well as the form. The thoughts are as truly Paul's thoughts in his Epistles, as the language and style are Paul's. In a like sense also, the manner, though human, is likewise divine. God speaks through Paul in Paul's manner. But Mr Wilson's theory makes the matter

solely God's, and the manner or form solely man's. If so, every thing is not divine, every thing is not human; but the Scriptures are partly human and partly divine. Mr Wilson then palpably contradicts himself, when he says, that every thing is divine, for according to him the manner of Scripture is not divine; and when he says that every thing is human, for according to his distinction, the matter can in no sense be human.

Of the writers of Scripture, he says, "They 'plead with those to whom they are sent, they ad-'dress the heart, they expostulate, they reason, 'they invite." Now this is a portion of the phenomena that belongs to man. But his theory requires that nothing belongs to man but the manner. Is there no matter then in the Scripture pleadings, addresses to the heart, expostulations, warnings, invitations? Are these all shadows without substance? Does not this admit that there is a sense in which the matter is man's as well as the manner? An apostle writes his own thoughts as well as in his own style; that is, God speaks through the thoughts and style of the apostle.

The facts of the case, he says, imply, "simply 'that God was pleased to use man as his instru-'ment," 502. This is perfectly correct, but perfectly contradictory to the author's theory. According to it, God does not make use of the instrumentality of man, but leaves a part of his work to the distinct agency of man, in which man acts as independently of God, as in his own part God acts independently of man. If in the manner or

form of revelation, man is only the rational instrument through whom God acts, then the theory of Mr Wilson is destroyed. Accordingly, though the author speaks thus in repelling objections, and endeavours to hide the hideousness of the system that would rob God of any part of his own word, yet he speaks another language when he exhibits his system. Instead of using the writers of Scripture as instruments, God, according to the author, "thought it right *to leave* them to the operations 'of their own minds, and the dictates of their own 'knowledge, habits, and feelings, as to the man-'ner of communicating his will," 501. In like manner, he quotes Warburton, who asserts "that 'the Divine superintendence was with *so sus-'pended a hand* as permitted the use, and *left* 'them to the guidance of their own faculties, while 'they kept clear of error." Here there is no instrumentality. The nurse watches the child stepping across the floor, and as long as it does not stumble, puts not a hand to the little adventurer. In such cases then, not only the manner but the matter also is no more God's, than the child's walking is the nurse's walking. It is then absurd and contradictory for Mr Wilson to assert distinct and independent provinces to God and man in the compositions of the bible, yet when it suits his view to speak of mere instrumentality on the part of man.

In another place, speaking of the Books of Scripture, he says, "They are the words of the 'Holy Ghost." This is all I ask, and less I will

not take. But how has the author the hardihood to make such an assertion, according to his views? Does he believe that all the words of all parts of Scripture are the words of the Holy Spirit? His language can have no lower import. Yet, does he not himself expressly distinguish between certain things that needed suggestion, and certain other things that needed less. Some things needed only the eye of the nurse. I ask Mr Wilson also, if all the words of Scripture are the words of the Holy Ghost, how it is that the style or manner of the Scripture is not the work of the Holy Ghost.

The author likewise speaks of "the wonderful 'union of Divine and human agency in the inspi-'ration of the Scriptures." Is human agency a component integral part of inspiration? This makes man the author of a part in the composition of the bible, as distinct from God; yet it absurdly makes that part that belongs to man only a part of inspiration. This is a crude theory Mr Wilson. A very slight cross-examination makes the witness refute himself. Again, in one place he says: "The 'Books are given by Divine inspiration," 499; in another, he says, "Where nature ended and 'inspiration began, it is not for man to say," 506. In the first, all is asserted to be inspiration; in the second, it is taken for granted, that part is inspiration, and part the work of man, though it is impossible to assign the boundary. If the Scriptures contained such contradictions, it would be impossible to defend their inspiration.

Let us now take a glance of the author's view of the advantages of his theory. "By this condescen-
'sion of God," says he, "in his manner of inspir-
'ing the Scriptures, truth is made more intelligible
'to the mass of mankind, than if the human facul-
'ties had been altogether suspended, and the feelings
'of common life extinguished or overborne." 514. Is it peculiar to our author's system to view the faculties of the writers of Scripture as active? Does any system deny it? I can admit this, and I do admit it, as fully as the author, while I contend that God speaks through the activity of the human faculties. I go farther than the author's distinction can consistently allow him. I can speak of Paul's thoughts, reasonings, arguments, &c. as well as of Paul's style. Why then does Mr Wilson make such a claim for his theory, when the advantage he would appropriate to it, is common to all? But in reality, it is an advantage that exists merely in Mr Wilson's fancy. The Scriptures might have been equally intelligible, and had it pleased God much more so, had the Scriptures been written by man through an inspiration that actually suspended all the rational faculties—nay, though they had been uttered by a statue, or written by a machine. Nothing can be more unfounded than the train of consequences which the author draws from the supposition of the Scriptures being written by an inspiration which should have suspended all the operations of the writer's mind. This, he says, "Must have spread
'an uniformity and sameness over the whole surface
'of the Scriptures." Why so, Mr Wilson? It

is equally easy to assert, and equally easy to prove, that there is no *must* in the case. Could not the same Almighty author have given the very same manner, with every variety of style, though man had been as unconscious as a block of marble, when he wrote them? "Must have expunged," continues our author, "all the varieties of style, diversities 'of narrative, and selection of topics—must have im-'pressed one and the same phraseology, and turn 'of expression upon all the sacred books in the 'same language." 519. There is not a *must* in any one of these particulars. Had God declined the instrumentality of man altogether in the writing of the Scriptures, would he not still have written in the language and style of man? Such writers as Mr Wilson, seem strangely to take it for granted, that if God had communicated the Scriptures without man, he would not have used the language of man. In their odd suppositions, they sometimes speak of the language of angels, as if that would be a revelation to man. I suppose the Ten Commandments are as intelligible as any part of the Scriptures, yet they were written by the finger of God, without any instrumentality of man. This then puts it beyond speculation, what the Scriptures would have been, even had there been no human instrumentality in them. This fact should have guarded Mr Wilson from indulging in such a train of romantic speculation.

The second advantage of inspiration as explained by this theory is, "The interpretation of Scripture 'is rendered more easy, as well as more safe."

Now this is an advantage which I cannot at all admit. On the contrary, there can be no doubt but without any human instrumentality, God might have rendered the Scriptures much more easily interpreted, and have freed them from all those apparent contradictions, and all those real difficulties and obscurities which it is generally acknowledged that they contain. The Scriptures have exactly that degree of clearness which the divine wisdom saw fit, and this he could have given them in whatever way he might have chosen to convey them. Let us, however, take a look at the reasons by which the author supports his position. "It depends not," he says, "on the turn of any one 'particular phrase, or the force of some few words, 'but springs from the general import of language 'familiar to us all." And had God given the Scriptures without human instrumentality, would it have been otherwise? Would more, in that issue, have depended on the turn of one particular phrase, or the force of some few words? Would less attention have been paid to the general import of language, or would the speech of heaven have been employed? Why does the author speak of language familiar to us all? As every nation has not the words of inspiration, he must mean human language, as distinguished from language not human. There seems to be a strange confusion in the author's mind on this subject. He seems to think that if the Scriptures had not been written through the instrumentality of man, they would not have been written in human language. Does he think that the

Scriptures would be a revelation at all, if they were not written in human language? Whether they might have been written by the finger of God, or by angels, they must equally have been written in the language of man. Has the author forgotten the Ten Commandments, and the various messages delivered to men by angels? What occasion had he to go to heaven for a language, as an alternative of the mode of communicating revelation? What reason had he to think that the language of God without a medium, or through the medium of angels, would have shunned the same mode of interpretation with the language of man?

"The Bible," he says, "is to be studied, its 'various parts compared, its metaphors illustrated, 'its poetical and historical allusions unfolded, all 'its declarations received, according to the well-'known rules of human writing." And would not the Bible be studied, though God had written it by the instrumentality of angels, or without instrumentality altogether? Does the author never study the Ten Commandments? Why might not the various parts of the Bible have been compared on any mode of inspiration? Is there any difference in the illustration of a metaphor, whether it has been pronounced by God immediately, or by man as God's rational organ? Would it be profane to exhibit the meaning and beauty of a metaphor as coming from God without a medium, yet lawful to make free with it coming through the medium of man? Perhaps this is the true reason why divines so earnestly labour to give God as little share

in the Scriptures as possible, and why they are so very bold in their manner of interpreting the word of God. They seem to think that the Bible is God's word, in a like sense as the speech delivered to parliament from the throne, is the king's speech; and treat it with similar rudeness and freedom.

Does Mr Wilson know of any view of inspiration that prevents the unfolding of poetical and historical allusions? Have not such allusions equal need of being unfolded on all modes of inspiration? Must not the declarations of the Bible be received, according to the well known rules of human writing, in whatever mode it has been inspired? Does the author really think that the Ten Commandments, and every other communication immediately from God, are not to be received according to the well-known rules of human writing? It is a wild and extravagant conceit, that the communications of God delivered immediately by himself to man, cannot be in the language of man; or, if in the language of man, cannot have their meaning ascertained by the known laws of human language. Should God speak to me from the throne of heaven, I would ascertain his meaning by the laws of human language, as well as when he speaks to me by Peter and Paul, Luke and John.

While the author provides work for the critic by his mode of inspiration, the unlearned Christian is kept in good humour by putting him on a level with the greatest scholars, with respect to knowledge of the great doctrines of Christianity. "The most 'unlearned Christian," says he, "stands upon

'the same ground, as to all the commanding truths 'of revelation, with the greatest scholars; whilst 'the utmost diligence of the scholar will find em-'ployment in the adaptation of his acquisitions to 'the illustration of the more difficult parts of the 'inspired volume." Now this is a compliment to the want of learning in which I cannot coincide. It is mere fanaticism. Indeed God often reveals himself to babes, while he hides himself from the wise and prudent; and many unlearned men have a much deeper and more correct knowledge of divine truth, than many learned Christians. Still I contend, that learning is of equal importance with respect to the exhibition, proof, and illustration of the commanding truths of revelation, as it is in that province which Mr Wilson exclusively assigns to it. There is no subject in revelation in which it is not profitable. There is no greater bar to progress in the knowledge of God, than the supposition that all who believe in Jesus Christ are equally acquainted with the Gospel. If all parts of Scripture deserve to be studied, this does so above all. And nothing will so well repay study. What a wonderful difference as to degrees of knowledge, between the simpleton saved by faith, and the Christian who, from his long and deep acquaintance with the Gospel, views it as a self-evident truth; having in itself its own evidence as much as the divine existence itself! Learning can in nothing be so well employed as on the great truths of the Gospel. There is indeed no room for speculation or theory, improvement or alteration; but all the learning in

the universe might be employed in exhibiting the inexhaustible treasures of truth.

The third advantage which the author finds in his system of inspiration is, that " By this plan, the ' trifling inaccuracies which have insinuated themselves into the copies of the Scriptures, by the ' carelessness of transcribers, the various readings ' which have accumulated during eighteen centuries, and the further defects arising from translations, or from our ignorance of a few particular ' allusions, are of less moment." Now, I cannot divine in what way these defects can be either increased or diminished by any mode of inspiration. I know indeed that the mode of treating divine truth employed by the Scriptures, interspersing the same doctrine in innumerable places, certainly does lessen the evil of various readings. But I know equally well that this does not belong to the subject of the mode of inspiration, and that this advantage might have been effected, had the Scriptures been written every word by the finger of God. If the author has an eye to this, he very unphilosophically confounds things as distinct as things can be. But let us hear himself in the illustration of this advantage. " They do not materially impair the force ' of the divine books, because those books are written by men like ourselves." Would the above defects have more materially impaired the force of the divine books, had they been written by angels, or by the finger of God? Would a various reading, or an imperfect translation, have a worse effect upon the Ten Commandments written by the finger of

God, or upon the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, delivered by the Lord Jesus Christ, than upon any of the Letters of Paul? In whatever way the Scriptures may be supposed to be inspired, the loss to the reader from the above defects is perfectly the same. Can any man, of sobriety of mind, suppose that if God had written every letter of the Scriptures without instrumentality, he was more interested to preserve the Sacred Volume from the errors of transcribers, than he is on the plan employed by him? Yet our author asserts it as an axiom, that if the Scriptures had been given by an inspiration which should have suspended all the operations of the writer's mind; it "must have required the perfectly pure preservation of all the copies in all ages from the errors of transcribers,—must have rendered various readings and imperfect translations of fundamental injury." These assertions seem to be so entirely without even plausibility, that I am at a loss to conceive how they can have influence on any intellect. On the contrary, it appears to me an axiom, that the same various readings and imperfect translations will equally injure the book, whatever be the mode of inspiration. Would an imperfect translation, or a various reading, do more injury to the Ten Commandments, than to the Third Epistle of John? But by what sort of juggling is it, that the author contrives to preserve the books considered as divine, when they are injured as human? If a word is lost, is no matter lost? Does he not say, that the matter is all divine? Words then that may be lost certainly

must contain no matter. The loss of words is only the loss of manner! How fond our author is of mysteries and paradoxes! The force of the divine books is not impaired by any casualty, because these divine books were written by men! Then, it seems, if all the Scriptures which have been written by men had been lost, all that is divine in them would still remain! Is not this a sort of spiritual legerdemain?

In the continuation of his illustration of this advantage, the author observes, "The truths are not 'conveyed dryly and systematically, but clothed 'with human feelings," &c. Had God written all the Bible with his own finger, must it have been a dry systematic work? Surely this has no relation to the subject of inspiration. It is a peculiarity and an advantage belonging to the plan of revelation, but with the subject of the mode of inspiration it has no more concern than it has with the genealogy of Melchisedec.

The fourth advantage which the author ascribes to his view of this subject, is, that the sacred books on this plan become capable of supplying proofs of authenticity. This is a sound observation. Had the Scriptures been written, either by God immediately, or through angels, we would have wanted those proofs of authenticity, that result from the characteristic style of each of the inspired writers. But the views of those who consider the various styles as also the work of God, as well as of man, possesses this advantage equally. When Sir Walter Scott writes in the style of any of his fictitious

characters, it is still the style of Sir Walter. The same may be said of other internal evidences, to which Mr Wilson's fifth advantage refers.

His sixth advantage also is real, and the illustration of it quite satisfactory. It will be of great advantage to read the Scriptures with this observation constantly in view, for it is exemplified in innumerable particulars. The Scriptures, he observes, are thus more adapted to be a moral probation of the heart. It might not be unprofitable to the author, to consider whether his observations may not apply to his own theory. The traces of the characteristic style of the fishermen of Galilee, may afford an occasion to worldly wisdom to invent a theory, founded on an arbitrary distinction, instead of submitting, like a little child, to believe the testimony of God on this question, asserting that " All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God." Surely there is nothing in Scripture which asserts, that the manner of Scripture is not as truly divine as the matter.

I am glad to find, that the author, in the first of his practical reflections, so decidedly condemns that wicked theory that some have lately brought forward, that daringly ventures to divest of inspiration some things in Scripture, as too trifling, and of too worldly a nature to deserve that honour. Such arrogance, assuming to sit in judgment on the word of Jehovah, instead of seeking instruction from every part of it, cannot be too severely reprobated. " The moment man dares to consider any part of ' Scripture as uninspired," says Mr Wilson, " he

'sets up his own prejudices as the rule of judg-
'ment; he believes only what he likes; and he
'commonly ends in undervaluing or rejecting some
'of the fundamental truths of the gospel." I would have had much greater pleasure in reviewing Mr Wilson's work, had he written the whole in a strain worthy of this observation.

The author's second reflection is, that his theory "tends to close the avenues to some of the most 'pernicious evils which have desolated the church." He divides these errors into two classes; the first takes too low a view of inspiration, and the second, too high a view. The usurpation over conscience, the authority of tradition, infallibility, the prohibition of the free use of the Bible to the laity, the exclusive imposition of a particular translation, and the intermixture of Apocryphal with Canonical writings, are all ascribed to the first. Now there can be no doubt, that the abettors of these errors have little practical regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures; but there can be as little doubt, that they do not arise from a denial of plenary inspiration. On the contrary, the Church of Rome will admit the inspiration of the Scriptures more fully than Mr Wilson himself. It will ascribe them to God, both in matter and manner. It admits the Apocrypha, not because it makes light of the inspiration of the genuine books of Scripture, but because it believes the Apocrypha to be inspired. It imposes an exclusive translation; not because it believes the original to be uninspired, or inspired in a low degree, but because it believes the Vulgate

to be an inspired translation. I wish Mr Wilson was engaged in actual combat with any Roman Catholic writer. He would soon be convinced, that he was here writing at random. There is no more reason to ascribe Popish errors to imperfect views of inspiration, than there is to ascribe all error to this source.

But it is more to my purpose to attend to the errors supposed to result from an overstrained view of inspiration. "On the other hand," says Mr Wilson, "the class of errors, not generally so fa-' tal, but yet most injurious, which spring from a ' forgetfulness of the human character, and form of ' the plan of inspiration, is to be guarded against." Now, reader, put your invention on duty, and try to find out a number of such errors—errors whose origin is the overlooking of the manner of inspiration. "If the inspiration of Scripture," says the author, "be so interpreted as to supersede the ' free and natural flow of the writer's mind." Is there any one who holds this? and if there is, does it lead to the supposed consequence? Cannot God convey his thoughts and his words, through the natural flow of the thoughts and words of him through whom he speaks? "If sound and rea-' sonable means of expounding the force of terms," says he, "the import of metaphors, the significa-' tion of allusions to local customs be discarded." Do any of those who have the highest views of inspiration, discard sound and reasonable means of expounding the force of terms, the import of metaphors, &c.? Or has their view any tendency to

countenance such extravagancies? Mr Wilson might as plausibly trace such evils to overstrained corollaries from the 47th proposition of the first book of Euclid's Elements. Why, Mr Wilson, do you talk so much at random? This loose reasoning has no more connection with the principles on which it is professedly founded, than it has with theories of the formation of the earth. "If the 'book," continues Mr Wilson, "is considered as 'so divine in its form, as well as its matter, as to 'exclude man's agency." Did any man ever hold this? Did ever Mr Wilson hear of any one who denied the agency of man in writing the Bible? Especially do they on whom he has his eye, deny the employment of man as a rational organ in the writing of the Scriptures? They believe indeed, that the Bible is as divine in its form, as in its matter, and as human in its matter, as in its form. But both as to matter and form, man was a rational organ in producing it. "If the human character of 'the manner," says he, "is forgotten—the errors 'which may arise, are by no means inconsiderable." Who can forget that the Scriptures are written in the form of human writings? This may be remembered, while at the same time, it is believed that they have received this human form from God. But that we may not fight in the dark, let us see what those errors are. "Truth is conveyed off, as 'it were, into the lifeless reservoirs of human con-'trivance, instead of flowing fresh from the living 'sources of the divine mind." Now a Scripture metaphor I could expound, but here is one that

discards the efforts of criticism. I can attach no more meaning to it, than if it were written in Chinese. Let us then examine the next supposed error. "Harsh and unnatural interpretations are 'imposed; arguments are violated, or misstated; 'figures and parables are pushed into minute and 'far fetched novelties." How do any of these evils result from the belief that God is the author of the Scriptures, both as to manner and matter? Does the author really think, that it would be lawful to impose harsh and unnatural interpretations, violate or misstate arguments, push figures and parables into minute and far fetched novelties, on the supposition that God had written the Scriptures with his own finger? Is there any difference as to the interpretation of a parable or any figure, whether it had been written by God or by man? The author seems constantly to labour under the strange impression, that if God should speak without human instrumentality, he would not speak in language to be expounded by the ordinary laws of speech. "Systems of theology," he continues, "are fram-'ed according to the taste and habits of the stu-'dent, and not after the native simplicity of the 'divine word." Many systems of theology, it is true, are of this stamp, but it is not the result of too high views of inspiration. Strange indeed, that a writer takes up his pen, with the conviction that the Scriptures are so eminently inspired, and that this very conviction leads him to form his system in utter disregard of these Scriptures! "A few 'passages are taken out of their connexion, and

‘ forced to an unnatural sense, and then the Scrip-
‘ tures compelled to bend to that exposition.”
Very bad indeed, but overstrained views of inspiration are surely the last thing in which a source should be sought for such an evil. “ The various
‘ statements and arguments of the Holy Scrip-
‘ tures, instead of being diligently examined and
‘ compared, as so many phenomena, from which
‘ inferences are to be drawn with the care of the
‘ inductive philosophy—are harshly put together,
‘ reduced to a few rigid and unbending proposi-
‘ tions, and are made the first principles of all sub-
‘ sequent advances. By these means, the doc-
‘ trine of the inspiration is overstrained, and mis-
‘ applied.” How is it possible that any reasoning mind could connect such errors with the opinion on which Mr W. supposes them to be founded? This surely is a noble instance of the inductive philosophy. The wildest enthusiasm in all its phrenzy, never uttered any thing more extravagant than this. A series of errors are ascribed to an origin with no more semblance of truth, than if they were deduced from wrong views of the solar system. Though a person should be so frantic as to believe that the writers of the Scriptures were unconscious organs, as devoid of understanding at the moment, as Balaam’s ass, his opinion would have no tendency to lead to any of the above errors. It is mere raving then to trace them to such a source. No man can be more destitute of a philosophic mind, than this writer.

" The human part is forgotten. Men pass over ' and obliterate all the finer traits, all the hidden ' and gentle whispers of truth, all the less obvious, ' and yet natural and affecting impressions of char- ' acter." Here again the writer gets into mystery. What are these finer traits, that are passed over and obliterated? How are they obliterated, if they are passed over? What are hidden whispers of truth? Who can hide a whisper? If it is hidden, how is it obliterated? Do not the gentle whispers of truth belong to the matter of Scripture? Are *they* manner merely; form without substance? What in plain English is the meaning of this sentence? Does the author really think that any one reads the Epistles of Paul, or Peter, James, or John, without knowing that man is speaking as well as God? Does he think that it is possible to overlook the human agency, while he is addressed by a writer expressly under his own name? Whatever probability there may be that some will forget that God speaks through man, there is none that they will forget that man speaks when he writes expressly with his own signature. The agency of man is not a fine trait, not a gentle whisper, not a less obvious impression; but the most prominent feature in revelation. He must be blind indeed, who does not see the Apostle Paul in his writings. Has ever the author met any species of two-legged animals, who are guilty of the errors which he here exposes? Yet the author speaks as if there was a very numerous class of this description. If it were the theme of a school-

boy torturing his barren brains to fill up a page or two, such a creation of fancied evils might find some apology. But on so grave a subject, it is utterly without excuse. There cannot exist an individual, who in reading the Scriptures, overlooks the agency of man. Is it then consistent with integrity, to create a class of fanatics so extravagantly frantic, for the mere purpose of disgracing a disagreeable sentiment?

And what connexion has the quotation from Lord Bacon with this subject? As much as it has with the theory of the tides. Lord Bacon prefers short, sound, judicious notes and observations on Scripture, to those commentaries that abound in common places, pursue controversies, and are reduced to artificial method. Well, what has this to say on the subject of inspiration? His Lordship illustrates his meaning by a figure. The wine that flows from the first treading of the grape, is sweeter and better than that forced out by the press. Whatever propriety of application this beautiful figure has to the subject, which it is brought to illustrate, it can have no application to Mr Wilson's purpose. Certainly it was not from a gentle *crush* of the Scriptures, that the author's theory of inspiration flowed. All the power of the *press* could not force it out of the words, "All Scripture is given by the 'inspiration of God," nor from any other words in the Bible. It is not merely the roughness of the husk and the stone that we find in this wine: We complain, that it is a wretched beverage produced by pouring water on the lees.

REMARKS ON THE REVIEW

OF THE

REV. DANIEL WILSON'S THEORY OF INSPIRATION,

IN THE

Christian Observer of October 1829.

It is fortunate for Mr Wilson, that all reviewers are not of my way of thinking on these matters. Some of them, will, no doubt, consider him as carrying his ideas of inspiration much too far. Even some who have professed evangelical sentiments have made much greater havoc on the Scriptures. The most rigidly orthodox reviewers, it seems, are quite satisfied with his views. The evangelical press of England, I have no doubt, will be on his side. The Christian Observer appears to consider itself as very scrupulous on the subject, yet it professes a substantial concurrence in his doctrine. It will be but justice then to Mr Wilson to exhibit the judgment of this Review, by the side of my remarks. I have no wish to conceal any thing that may be

supposed to throw light upon a point which I deem so vitally important.

The Christian Observer's account of Mr Wilson's theory, is contained in the following extract. "The 'next Lecture introduces us to a subject of much 'difficulty; namely, the plenary inspiration of the 'Scriptures, leaving no defect or error in the re-'ligious revelation; and the human form, the mould, 'the peculiar character, the natural methods of ex-'pression; the poetry, the history, the devotion,— 'in short, the whole apparatus of earthly instru-'mentality, all impressed with the stamp of man, 'all intelligible to man, all to be interpreted by the 'laws of ordinary sense, and constantly applied by 'grammatical, logical and historical rules. Mr 'Wilson considers the matter all divine—the man-'ner all human; that is, with a constant preserva-'tion from all error affecting the revelation. He 'views the Bible as God speaking to man, not by 'angels, nor in the language, nor with the ideas, 'associations, and style of angels, if angels have 'such characteristics—but by man, in the language 'of man, and with the ideas, associations, and 'style of man."

Though the first sentence is not remarkable for its clearness and precision, this extract will shew that I have not misrepresented Mr Wilson's meaning. My view of it is substantially the same with that given here. The Scriptures are impressed with the stamp of man, that is, they are written as if each of the writers were communicating his own thoughts. Did any man ever doubt this? Is this

a discovery? Was there ever a reader of the Scriptures who was so ignorant as not to know this? But have not the thoughts, reasoning, and arguments the same impression? Could not God as easily use the respective style of the writers of revelation, as he has used their thoughts, reasoning, and arguments? Has he not communicated his truth and will to us, through the thoughts, reasoning, and arguments of the inspired writers, as well as through their style? The Epistle to the Romans, or to the Galatians, &c. is as much Paul's matter, as Paul's manner. Both are his in one sense; both are God's in another. The style is the style of Paul, but could not God use that style when he wrote by Paul? The thoughts also are Paul's thoughts; but could not God convey his mind in the way of Paul's thinking and reasoning? If these gentlemen possessed a little philosophical perspicacity, they would perceive that there is no difference in this matter, between the thoughts and the style; both equally possessing the marks of the mind of man. There is no more reason from this human impression, to conclude that the manner was without God as to the style, than as to the matter.

But not only has every thing in Scripture, according to these writers, the stamp of man, but what must be equally surprising, "all is intelligible to man." Now is this a peculiarity in the manner of inspiration? What childish trifling? Must not revelation have been intelligible to man in whatever way inspired? In whatever way com-

municated? Had God given it by angels, would it not have been intelligible? Had he given it immediately from his own hand, would it not have been intelligible? What peculiar darkness is in the messages delivered by angels? Have these gentlemen ever read the Ten Commandments? Is not the language of the tables of the law sufficiently perspicuous?

But not only are all things intelligible to man, it is added, "all to be interpreted by the laws of ordinary sense, and constantly applied by grammatical, logical, and rhetorical rules." And if God had written the Scriptures himself, or given them through man as an unconscious instrument, would not this have been equally the case? Must not every thing written in any language necessarily be understood in the sense of that language? To say that God might have written his word in human language, and that its meaning was not to be judged by the ordinary rules of that language, is a contradiction in terms. For if it is not to be understood in the sense of the language, it is not in the language. The fact that revelation is written in the peculiar style of each of the inspired writers, is a peculiarity in inspiration worthy of being noticed; and from it doubtless we may derive instruction; but that it is written in our language, and to be understood in the sense of the language in which it is written, and that it is intelligible to men, are no peculiarities. To mention such things as a distinguishing part of inspiration is the most silly trifling. The same may be said with respect

to the alternative of speaking by angels. " He ' views the Bible," says the reviewer, " as God ' speaking to man, not by angels," &c. And did ever any one take a different view of this matter? Was it ever thought that the Bible was written by angels in the language of angels? A most important discovery surely, that the Bible was not written in the language of angels! By angels it might have been written, or by the finger of God; but whether by the one or by the other, it must have been written in the language of those to whom it was designed to be a revelation. The language of angels then, it is absurd to mention as an alternative. What Cimmerian darkness is it then that clouds the minds of these writers, that as often as they make the supposition that God or angels had written a revelation for man, they think it might have been written in the language of heaven! A book written in the language of angels, it is absurd to speak of as a revelation to man.

Let the reader observe in this extract the limitation even to divine superintendence in the writing of the Scriptures—" with a constant preservation ' from all error affecting the revelation." I noticed the same thing in Mr Wilson as this reviewer has done. According to this the writers of Scripture were not preserved from all error, but only from such error as should affect the revelation. This, however, seems inconsistent with many of Mr Wilson's assertions.

The reviewers next inform us: " We have of- ' ten thought long and anxiously on this much

‘ controverted question; nor are we wholly igno-
‘ rant of what the most celebrated biblical writers
‘ and theologians have written upon it, or of the
‘ difficulties which may be supposed to attach
‘ themselves to whatever conclusions we may
‘ adopt.” If these gentlemen would consult the Scriptures with the teachableness of little children, they might sooner come to their purpose, than either by abstract thinking on the question as a subject of controversy, or by poring over the volumes of biblical writers. The last is an aid not to be despised; but I am convinced that an implicit reliance on it, to the neglect of the first, is the cause of much of the very great ignorance of the learned with respect to this subject. As long as men attempt to surmount all difficulties by untaught distinctions in inspiration, and by theories founded merely on supposition, instead of submitting to the testimony of God, that “ all Scripture
‘ is given by inspiration of God,” it may be expected that, like the sorcerer who opposed Paul, they will seek one to lead them at noon-day. That there are difficulties connected with inspiration, I do not deny; for I do not know any truth or duty revealed in Scripture that has not its difficulties. But this I know, that the authors of the late theories have not in the smallest degree contributed to remove these difficulties. The greatest of these difficulties remain, even were any of these theories admitted. The greatest difficulties that have ever occurred to me do not at all respect the complete inspiration of the Scriptures, both in matter and

words. All that the doctrine of the inspiration of every word in the original Scriptures demands, is, that every thing written in them was written by inspiration. This has no more difficulty when it applies to the advice of Gamaliel, or the Letter of Claudius Lysias, the chief Captain, than when it applies to the Sermon on the Mount. That every word of Scripture has been inspired, does not imply that every speech or sentiment recorded there should be inspired. The Letter of Claudius Lysias was not inspired, but it is inserted in the Scriptures by inspiration; and for a purpose useful for the edification of the man of God. To this view of inspiration I have never met an objection that could detain me for a moment. All that Mr Wilson and the Christian Observer bring forward is perfectly consistent with it. What they allege, is a thing so obvious, that it could lie hid from no child that is able to read the Scriptures; and instead of being in opposition to my sentiments, is taken for granted in all my reasoning. Paul's writings are in Paul's style; but this applies to the thoughts as well as the form.

"Our general impression upon the whole," say the reviewers, "we confess, is, that Mr Wilson 'is not far from having arrived at the true phi-'losophy of the matter." The thing under discussion is not a matter of philosophy, nor to be ascertained by philosophical investigation. It is a matter of divine testimony, the meaning of which is to be ascertained by the laws of language. God says, "all Scripture is given by inspiration of

' God;" Mr Wilson, on the contrary, says, some part of Scripture is human. Mr Wilson's philosophy then teaches him to contradict God. But Mr Wilson's theory is as bad philosophy as it is bad theology. It makes a part contained, no portion of the whole that contains it. The manner is supposed not to belong to the writing of which it is the manner. The style belongs to the writing; and if all Scripture is given by inspiration, the manner of Scripture must be given by inspiration. No theory was ever propounded with less philosophical perspicacity than this. It distinguishes what cannot be distinguished; and ascribes effects to causes with which they have not the slightest connection. Besides, this theory makes only the matter divine. Then the words are not divine. Are the words the matter? Yet it makes the words of a great part of the Scriptures to be divine as well as the matter. Is this philosophy?

Again, it makes all the matter divine, yet it makes a great part of the matter human, supplied from the sources of the private knowledge, information, &c. of the different writers. Is this philosophy? Nor are these the only inconsistencies of this theory. While it makes all the matter divine, it supposes the possibility even of some error in the matter, in things that do not respect the revelation.

Again, it makes the *inspiration* itself the joint production of God and man. Is this philosophy?

Still farther, it makes only the manner human, yet it allows " the greatest freedom and latitude in ' the use of each writer's knowledge and talents,

' and ordinary means of information." Is not this something more than manner? In the exercise of this freedom, did they introduce no matter? If it is said that they were superintended in the introduction of this matter, I reply that then they had not the greatest freedom and latitude. I reply farther, that superintendence is not inspiration, and that things introduced under superintendence are not mere manner. There is no consistency in this theory.

" We would, on the one hand," say the reviewers, " zealously maintain against the semi-sceptic, ' or Socinian disputer, the plenary inspiration of the ' Scriptures; we would not allow for a moment ' with the Belshams and Priestlys of England, or ' the Neologians of Germany, that an apostle or ' Baptist may maintain true conclusions from incon- ' clusive arguments; that Jewish prejudices were ' allowed to pervert the Christian records; that the ' Evangelists were little more than mere ordinary ' relators of a true story; or that a God of infinite ' wisdom permitted his record of mercy to a perish- ' ing world, to be liable to take any doubtful co- ' louring by passing through a human medium, ' what it must have done, had it not been dictated ' by his immediate and infallible inspiration."

I may here remark the want of candour in such a use of the word *plenary*. Surely *plenary inspiration* cannot apply to the views of those who make any exceptions to the inspiration of the Scriptures. Does not this phrase refer to every thing in the Scriptures, and to every word of the Scriptures?

Is it not then an abuse of language to speak of holding plenary inspiration, while some things in Scripture are expressly excepted from inspiration? This is a mean artifice to sap the foundation of the full inspiration of Scripture under the mask of holding it. To those unacquainted with what has been written on the subject, the phrase *plenary inspiration*, would undoubtedly convey a meaning very different from that in which it is dishonestly used by many writers. With what propriety can persons assert that they hold the doctrine of plenary inspiration, when, according to their systems, much of the Scriptures was not inspired at all? Some part of it belongs to man, and in many things he was only superintended, which is a very different thing from inspiration. But why are the poor Belshams and Priestlys, with the Neologians of Germany, not to be indulged in the exceptions which they make to inspiration? Is this high popish prerogative, of distinguishing and limiting, where there are no distinctions or limitations in Scripture, to be confined to Evangelical divines alone? Must the Belshams and Priestlys surrender to the more orthodox zeal and predilections of the Christian Observer? What is it that can put down the impious views of Belsham and Priestly on this subject? No abstract reasoning; no abhorrence of Christian Observers, no *a priori* evidence,—nothing but the declarations of God in the Scriptures. God says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." This cuts down the horrible blasphemy of Belsham and Priestly; and this equally cuts down the less

horrible blasphemy of the Rev. D. Wilson and the Christian Observer. The man who makes any exception, cannot consistently refuse any other exception. The difference between Mr Wilson and Dr Priestly is only in degree. Both proceed on the same principle, though the evangelical minister may not choose to carry his doctrine as far as the Socinian philosopher. The Christian Observer is shocked with the heresy that makes the Evangelists little more than mere ordinary relaters of a true story; yet how much higher does even Mr Wilson place them in some parts of their narrative? The Christian Observer thinks it necessary that the record of mercy should be dictated by *immediate inspiration*. But is this the kind of inspiration for which Mr Wilson contends in the Evangelists? Much of the record is not by inspiration at all.

" Yet, at the same time," says the Christian Observer, " does not every divine, even those who ' would most strongly object to the latter part of ' Mr Wilson's statements; nay, does not the most ' uninstructed person who thinks the very words of ' King James' translation, the original diction of ' the Holy Spirit, familiarly speak of the respective styles of St Paul or St John; of the sublimity of Isaiah, or the pathos of Jeremiah; of ' the characteristic peculiarities of the four Evangelists, all relating the same truths by the same ' inspiration, yet each in a manner which may be ' justly called his own?" Very true, that there is a distinction in the style of the different writers of Scripture, and that each writer may be said to have

his own. Learned and unlearned admit this. The defenders of the full inspiration of the Scriptures speak of this, as well as their opponents. But what is the inference from all this? Is it, that Mr Wilson has made a discovery, when he has turned into a theory what is admitted by all? Is it that, as the writers of Scripture have a characteristic style, they were not influenced by God in the use of that style? Is it not possible, that God could employ their style, as well as their tongue or pen? Yes, we talk familiarly of Paul's peculiar style, and of John's peculiar style; and we talk as familiarly of Paul's doctrine, of Paul's reasoning, &c. But in so speaking, we do not mean to assert, that the writings of Paul, both in doctrine and style, are not God's. Indeed, the very universality of the fact of such a manner of speaking, is the strongest evidence, that there is no opposition between the supposition of a characteristic style, and the belief that this, in another point of view, is the work of God. As the most ignorant persons find no difficulty in admitting, that the Scriptures may be written in the respective styles of the different writers, while they believe that every word of the Scriptures is inspired, why will the learned conjure up a difficulty to give scope to their ingenuity in forming theories? But where have these sages found the man who believes that the very words of the authorised version, are the original diction of the Holy Spirit? Is there any one able to read the Bible, who believes that it was written in English? But this is not all. This person who thinks that

the Bible was originally written in English, is quite conversant with the characteristic style of each of the inspired writers; and can speak as accurately as Longinus himself, of the sublimity of the one, the pathos of the other, &c. What a compound of ignorance and knowledge must he be?

The reviewers proceed, "Mathematically to adjust correctly the two points in their minute boundaries, may not be easy; but it appears to us to be an excess of scrupulosity to deny, when expressly reasoning on the subject, what we constantly admit when not thinking of it." What have mathematics to do with settling metaphysical distinctions? Were an angel to draw the line, it could not be done mathematically. There is no more propriety in bringing mathematics to settle a difficulty on the subject of inspiration, than in bringing a text from the Bible, to settle a point in the conic sections. But the distinction as to the present subject, is not a line separating between adjacent territories; the same territory belongs to different occupiers, to the one it belongs in one sense, to the other in another. The Epistle to the Romans, for instance, is the Epistle of Paul, contains the thoughts, reasoning, arguments, language, and style of Paul; but the same Epistle is the word of God, both in style and matter. It would not only be "an excess of scrupulosity to deny, when expressly reasoning on the subject, what we constantly admit when not thinking of it," but it would also be extreme folly. But at all times, we are willing to make the admission in the

amplest terms. Did any man ever deny, in reasoning on this subject, that the Scriptures have the characteristic style of their different writers?

In illustration of this variety of characteristic style, substantially expressing the same thing, the reviewers give us an example. "Take a familiar 'example, a parent says separately to four child-'ren, 'call your brother Richard.' One simply 'repeats the message as the words of his parent: '' Richard, my father desires me to call you.' 'A second makes the message his own: 'Richard, '' my father wants you.' A third repeats it as an 'injunction: 'Richard, you must go to my father.' 'The fourth: 'Brother Richard, pray run direct-'' ly to our dear father, for he wants to speak to '' you.' Are not all these exactly the father's 'message, and is it to contravene this proposition to 'say, that each was delivered in a manner charac-'teristic of the respective speakers?" Now this example is entirely unsuited to the illustration of the point for which it is brought. It gives a mere variety of expression, but by no means four characteristic styles. So far from this, the very same individual might, in delivering the message, on different occasions, use each of these forms of expression. Yes, and twenty other similar varieties. Indeed, in repeating a message to different individuals separately, who is it that keeps by a single mode of expression? A hundred such varieties are consistent with the style of the same speaker.

As an illustration of substantial harmony, the example is equally defective. Did any one ever

suppose, that mere variety of expression is contradiction? The most inveterate hater of the word of God, would never allege any inconsistency in this, if he met it in the Scriptures. There is not even the shadow of an appearance of contradiction. The relation of each of the brothers is as much, and as directly, the father's message, as words could express. Did not each call Richard? What else was the command of the father? This example then, does not correspond to any of the apparent discrepancies in the account of the Evangelists, to which the infidel objects. Of what avail would such an example be to harmonize the four accounts of the inscription over the cross? Instead of sending four messengers to one person, it would have been more to the purpose to have sent one messenger, and have given four writers to report the delivery of the message, with such a variety as the Gospels give of the above fact. Indeed, to send four messengers on such an errand, was a very clumsy expedient. The invention of a reviewer ought to be more fertile in resources. If the difficulties on the subject of inspiration were of the nature that this example supposes, it would be an easy thing indeed to clear them away. He must be a sceptic indeed, who alleges that, when a number of persons are commanded to call an individual, the message is not executed, except they all use the same words. Certainly the reviewers have thought long, and anxiously, and profoundly on this subject. After their able solutions of the most

formidable objections, infidelity must ever after feel abashed.

The reviewers are of opinion, that it does not derogate from the author's conclusions of full inspiration, that he has admitted, "though perhaps 'not in the most desirable words, a wonderful uni-'on of divine and human agency in that inspira-'tion." So then, it appears, the reviewers agree with the author in making man's part in the business, a constituent of inspiration. Man, it seems, has partly inspired the Scriptures. And do the reviewers really think, that it does not derogate from full inspiration, that a part has been effected by man without God? Indeed they object to the author's phraseology. They would not say, that "the Scriptures are both human and divine;" but they say, "when he explicates his proposi-'tion, we agree with him." Now in what sense can it be said, that the Scriptures are human, in consistency with the assertion, that they are all divine, or fully inspired? Only as they are written by the instrumentality of man, in the style of man, and after the manner of human writings. But this will not serve the purpose of the author's theory. This theory makes them human as a constituent part of their composition; a part in which God has no hand. Now if there is any thing merely human in the Scriptures, it cannot be true that they are wholly of God, or fully inspired. The author's doctrine then is a self-contradiction. The only reason why this contradiction lies hid from the smallest critical discernment is, that by the assertion

that the style and manner are human, he frequently means no more than what every one admits, namely, that they are the characteristic style and manner of the writers. In this light the Christian Observer seems to consider his doctrine; but in this sense there is nothing in the assertion that can entitle it to be called a theory of Mr Wilson's. Besides, his assertions again and again make the style and manner a distinct part in the composition of the Scriptures, in which God had no hand.

But why do the reviewers refuse to say that the Scriptures are human as well as divine, if they adopt the author's conclusions? If a constituent part of the composition belongs to man in such a sense, that it does not also belong to God, is not such a fact as truly human, as the rest is divine? Indeed, according to Mr Wilson, the Scriptures are neither human nor divine; they are not, as he asserts, in contradiction to himself, all human and all divine; they are partly human and partly divine. But according to his theory, they are as truly human as they are divine. The Christian Observer then appears to be very slightly acquainted with this subject.

It is much to be lamented, that a periodical which has so much influence on the Christian public, should express itself substantially satisfied with a theory of inspiration which lowers the character of the divine word, without even the alleviating circumstance, of removing a single difficulty connected with the subject. That so crude a theory should be dignified as a philosophical solution of a

difficult theological question, hitherto unanswered, must surprise every one capable of analysing the author's paradoxes. Indeed, a paradoxical way of speaking is the only thing original in this scheme. Let it be divested of this, and nothing is left for Mr Wilson. The fact, that in the Scriptures there is a human manner, has never been questioned—has never been unknown. That not only the manner, but the thoughts, reasonings, and conclusions may all be ascribed to the writers, is a thing that no man who reads the Bible can question. How then can Mr Wilson deserve the credit of unveiling an important hidden truth? What has he discovered, that was not always known? To the careless reader, who never thinks of forming accurate ideas of what lies before him, there is in Mr Wilson's language, the appearance of great depth and metaphysical acumen in reconciling things apparently incongruous; but when it is more closely examined, it turns out to be a pompous way of saying nothing. But if God is in very deed, the AUTHOR of the Scriptures, how guilty must he be, who has exerted his ingenuity to deprive him of any part of them! How guilty must they be, who encourage him in this sacrilege!

STRICTURES ON SOME PARTS

OF THE

REMARKS OF THE ECCLECTIC REVIEW,

May 1, 1829,

ON

DR SCHLEIERMACHER'S CRITICAL ESSAY ON THE GOSPEL OF ST LUKE.

It will be recollected that it was in the Ecclectic Review that the infidel paper appeared, which excludes from the sacred canon of inspired Scripture, a considerable portion of the Old Testament. It will not therefore appear surprising to any who are acquainted with this fact, that the same professedly Evangelical publication, has, in its review of Dr Schleiermacher's Critical Essay on the Gospel of Luke, audaciously charged the Evangelists with falsehood. The accounts in the different Gospels are, according to the reviewers, in some points so contradictory, that they have fearlessly adopted the conclusion that the writers of them have erred.

The work which they profess to review is on the origination of the Gospels, and is of an entirely Neo-

logical cast. The reviewers indeed censure his boldness and condemn his errors, but they approach him with such awe and timidity, that their gentle reproach must be very agreeable to him, if he has any vanity. I shall not trouble myself with the review farther, than respects the subject of inspiration. Schleiermacher's book is one of those productions, that professes to throw light upon the subject of the Evangelical History, by tracing the different Gospels to their origin. Such writers suppose that they can discover the different external sources from which the Evangelists took their accounts, and that this discovery removes the difficulties felt from the disagreement of their narratives. The elucidation of this question has occupied some of the most considerable Biblical scholars in our own country, and the Ecclectic Review has produced a specimen on this subject, which shews their entire approbation of such attempts. Now, notwithstanding the celebrity of some of the writers who have occupied their ingenuity on this subject, and the general approbation of their labour, I will be as rash as Job's three friends, and pronounce with the fullest confidence, that the utmost exertions of talent can never produce any thing but a figment in this matter; and farther, that though the truth was exactly known, it would be of no value for the alleged purpose. It is indeed perfectly agreeable to the doctrine of complete inspiration, that the writers of the Gospels should have taken much of their accounts from external sources. Inspiration applies to them in copying a genealogical title, receiving an account of

a fact from an eye witness, copying uninspired records, or making extracts from them, as well as in the most important communications of the Holy Spirit. But to pretend at this distance of time, to discover and ascertain the different external sources from which each of the Evangelists draw their materials, is an attempt that sober good sense never will make. No historical question can ever be settled by theory. The utmost that ingenuity can reach is probability, or rather plausibility. A thing may have been so as is alleged, but it may not have been so, and nothing but childish credulity will ever receive as historical truth, the most harmonious tales of fiction.

If this is a just observation, how deplorable is it that the young Biblical student should have his talents so misdirected as they are likely to be, by the remarks in the following extract from the Ecclectic Review?

"The subject to which this volume (Schleiermacher's Essay) relates, is the origination of the 'Gospels, particularly the first three. The Bishop 'of Peterborough's Dissertation, annexed to his 'Translation of Michaelis's Introduction, in 1801, 'first brought the subject fully before the minds of 'English readers. The early Protestant Commen'tators and Divines, with the exception of Gro'tius, had scarcely adverted to the subject, or had 'contented themselves with occasional and brief 'notices, such as a slight examination must have 'ascertained to be quite unsatisfactory. Towards 'the beginning of the eighteenth century, Le Clerc, 'Mill, and Wetstein, proposed their opinions on

'this question; and in a following period, it was in-
'vestigated with great assiduity by Michaelis and
'many others of the German critics, and in our
'own country chiefly by the late Dr Henry Owen.
'But it is during the last forty years that the most
'laborious diligence has been employed upon it,
'by the late estimable Dr Niemeyer, by Eich-
'horn, and by many others of the German Bible
'scholars." Such is the history of this foolish and untaught question. The laborious trifling of misemployed learning and ingenuity is here exhibited with an approbation that must give a wrong direction to the talents of young biblical students, as far as it has any influence on the Christian public. In what immediately follows, we have the phenomena and the theory founded on them. "Whoever reads
'a Greek Harmony of the Gospels, must be struck
'with these facts: that Matthew, Mark, and Luke
'frequently recite the same facts, but particularly
'speeches of our Lord, in the same words;—that
'often there is such a variation of the words, but
'conservation of the sense, as usually takes place
'when two persons translate into one language a
'passage from a foreign book;—that still more in-
'stances occur, in which the variation is much less
'than must necessarily be in the case just suppos-
'ed, while yet the conformity is not perfect, as in
'the first class of instances;—that in some cases,
'the differences are very considerable, referring to
'words spoken, actions performed, and the con-
'secution of events;—and that in other cases, the
'variations are such as appear irreconcilable by

'any method that ingenuity can devise, so that we 'are driven to the conclusion, that some of the 'Evangelists have erred in the dates of events, the 'combination of materials, and other minute cir-'cumstances, merely of an outward and mechani-'cal kind, and which have no effect whatever on 'the certainty of their narrative, or its grand use 'for religious instruction."

Here we have without disguise the appalling assertion that there are various errors in the Evangelical histories. It is not my business to controvert this infidel statement, else I might allege that ingenuity might yet do what it has never done, and that all former failures are no certain proof that the thing is impracticable. These sages are not to take it for granted, that human ingenuity can never advance beyond their attainments, or even the advance of all former times. I might allege reconciliation might be possible, though human ingenuity should never effect it, and that a proper sense of human weakness, as well as a reverence for the word of God, ought to have prevented this blasphemous charge. Pray, gentlemen reviewers, might not a harmony of the Gospels be possible, though your exquisite sagacity has not found it? I might allege also, that in effecting a harmony, every possible supposition is perfectly allowable, and any thing that could possibly reconcile the accounts may be taken for granted. Even if two accounts apparently of the same transaction should be palpably irreconcilable, there is still a possibility that it is not the same. A sentiment uttered on one occa-

sion, may have been uttered on another with some variety, and that which appears to be the same miracle variously related, may in reality have been two. But I will allege nothing like this. I will take it for granted that the blasphemous charge of these Evangelical critics is true. Of what use on this supposition, are speculations on the origination of the Gospels? Can the result of these speculations produce a harmony where there is acknowledged contradiction? They may account for variety, but can they excuse error? If the Evangelists have erred, it does not free them from that error, to discover its source. After all the speculations of these theorists, the error, with all its evils, still remains. But these errors, it seems, are of small moment. They are merely "outward and 'mechanical." But how errors of dates and false combinations of fact, can be called *the outward and mechanical errors of history*, is what I cannot understand. Faults of this kind do not belong to inartificial composition. Nor is it true that errors of this description have no effect on the certainty of the narrative. It is true indeed, that the substance of a narrative may be true, while there is a mistake in the date; and two facts may be true, while they are erroneously combined; but error in any of these respects, brings the whole Bible into suspicion; and when the whole claims the authority of inspiration, a false date is as bad as a false narrative. When we read, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of 'God," we cannot admit that God has committed an error in the date, more than in the transactions.

This passage of Scripture demands truth in the dates, as well as in the substance of the narratives. If the Scriptures assert inspiration equally with respect to every part of them, an error of any kind, were it established against them, would overturn their authority.

"There are, indeed," says the reviewers, "some 'persons who suppose that all and singular the 'sentences and words, in the very order in which 'they stand through the whole of the Gospel Re-'cords, were literally dictated by the Holy Spi-'rit;" Extravagant fanatics! What could lead them to so wild a conceit! What absurdity to suppose that the words and sentences of a book, aye, *all and singular the words and sentences*, in the very order in which they stand, should be the very words and sentences and arrangement of the author of such book! What then, gentlemen, is your theory on this subject? Will you shew us how any piece of composition can be ascribed to an author, when the words, sentences, and collocation are not his own? Are the words, sentences, and arrangement, no parts of the writing to which they belong? I am one of those fantastic people who believe that a writing contains all the words, sentences, and arrangement, that are found in it; and therefore cannot see how all Scripture is given by inspiration, if any word originally in the Scriptures was uninspired. I am so old fashioned, as to believe, that if all Scripture is inspired, there is no Scripture which is uninspired; for I have not yet learned to believe both sides of a contradiction. But

this is not the most extravagant thing that these grave reviewers charge on their opponents on the question of inspiration. They add, "and that the 'Evangelists had no other part to perform than 'that of mechanical hand-writers." Stop a little, gentlemen. Where did you find this? In whose writings can you verify this charge? I will not say that you never met with it, for in London, that hot-bed of fanaticism, there may be paroxisms of religious phrenzy beyond the cold conception of mere provincials. But I will say, since I began to examine this subject, I have not met it. I never met an individual who looked upon the Evangelists as merely mechanical hand-writers. It is universally admitted, that the inspired writers were rational organs through which the Holy Spirit communicated his mind, though every word written by them in the Scriptures was from God. There is nothing irreconcilable in the two parts of this statement. God can surely speak his words through man, in such a way that the words and thoughts shall be the words and thoughts of both. If, however, the reviewers make this assertion with respect to those who in the late controversy have held the doctrine of verbal inspiration, the charge is utterly false. And there is some reason to think, that this is the allusion. For they add, "those persons, 'therefore, do not shrink from maintaining, that the 'variations, equally with the coincidences, even those 'which apparently are the most insusceptible of be-'ing bent to reconciliation, all proceeded from one 'and the same source, the verbal prescription of the

'Spirit of truth." I have distinctly avowed the sentiment here alluded to; and I do not shrink from defending any thing I have advanced on the subject. I have said, that any variety that is warrantable in the different rehearsals of the same fact by an honest witness in the things of man, is equally warrantable in the different relations of the same fact by the Holy Spirit. It is a fanatical misconception of the nature of truth and falsehood, to suppose that what is consistent with veracity in the language of man, would be inconsistent with it in the language of God. To repeat a narrative with the exactness of a message in Homer's heralds, is not required by truth in the language of either God or man. And if there are any discrepancies in the accounts of the Evangelists, which do not come under the protection of this shield, but are real errors, I maintain that they overturn the inspiration of the Scriptures altogether, and are inconsistent with the declaration, that "All Scripture is given by the in-
'spiration of God."

"The chief questions are," say the reviewers, "Did one or two of the first three Evangelists
'transcribe from the other? Or did they all make
'use of some one common document, taking from
'it more or less of their respective matter? Or
'had they a variety of such common documents?
'The affirmative of each of these positions has been
'maintained by different writers; and each has at-
'tempted to shew the impossibility of any theory
'being true, except his own." Now, if there is an irreconcilable difference between the accounts

of the Evangelists on any point, how can it harmonize them to know the sources from which each took his matter? Do not the reviewers assert, that some of the accounts are erroneous? Of what avail then is it to point out the source of the error, even were this possible? Can this excuse falsehood, or convert falsehood into truth? If two English historians differ in the date of any event, does it reconcile them to point out the different authorities which they have followed? So far then from these being the chief questions on this subject, they are not questions that relate to the subject at all. And as they are questions that are not answered by the Scriptures, they are questions that no man of a sound mind would ever ask. They are questions that never can be answered but by conjecture; and on such answers a wise man will not build any part of his faith on any subject. They are questions perfectly similar to those which have inquired after the name and the kindred of the Witch of Ender, and the names of those two men who accompanied Saul when he went to consult her. Who can tell whether her name was Zephaniah, or in what respect would it profit us to know this? Is it possible to determine, whether or not she was the mother of Abner? Or would the settling of this question enrich our knowledge? Whether Abner and Amasa were the two men that accompanied Saul on his errand, cannot now be known; and could it be known, would be of no advantage.

Such questions did much occupy the Jewish Doctors, and much of the information which they communicated in their commentaries is of this sort. It is lamentable to find the censors of the press, the professed defenders of evangelical sentiments in England in the nineteenth century, approving of a species of inquiry equally vain, equally useless. To find out the sources of the Gospels by theories founded on suppositions, is as idle as to attempt the discovery of the sources of the Nile or the Niger in the same manner.

That my readers may be enabled to judge with more advantage with respect to these competent theories, I shall present them with a specimen that these reviewers have themselves exhibited with approbation. "Perhaps we shall be forgiven," they say, "if we here borrow a few paragraphs 'from lectures on this subject, which have been 'delivered more than twenty years ago, in one of 'the Dissenting Colleges near the metropolis."

"Wherever the apostles went to preach the gos-'pel, we find them attentive to two great objects; 'the first, the conversion of men to the faith and 'obedience of their Redeemer; the second, the in-'struction and edification of those who had been 'already converted.

"In discharging the duties of the second class, 'the first Christian teachers must have experienced 'such a state of things as I shall now take the li-'berty of supposing. The new converts could not 'but feel themselves deeply interested to inquire 'for all attainable information relative to the cha-

‘ racter, conduct, miracles, and discourses of the ‘ Lord Jesus. With such requests, the apostolic ‘ instructors would undoubtedly be disposed to com- ‘ ply, to the utmost of their power and opportu- ‘ nity. We have in Acts xx. 35, a reference to in- ‘ formation of this kind, but which is not recorded ‘ by any one of the Evangelists.

“ ‘The relations thus given by the apostles, would ‘ be of various length, and would comprehend one ‘ or more anecdotes or discourses; as the judgment ‘ of the relaters, under the inspiring guidance of ‘ the Holy Spirit, dictated the propriety of the se- ‘ lection, in application to the circumstances of ‘ those for whose benefit it was imparted.

“ These relations would be justly esteemed of ‘ the highest value; on account of the important ‘ and interesting nature of the matter, and on account ‘ of the promised influence of the Holy Spirit, to ‘ bring to the recollection of the disciples “ all things ‘ ‘ whatsoever Jesus had said unto them.”

“ Within the immediate confines of Judea, the ‘ apostles would usually deliver their discourses in ‘ Syro-Chaldaic, the language of the country; but ‘ in other places they commonly spoke the Alex- ‘ andrian Greek.

“ Though it is not probable that any of the apos- ‘ tles, during the first few years of their laborious ‘ duties, committed to writing any large accounts; ‘ they might, upon request, write down such or ‘ such a particular relation or discourse of their ‘ Divine Master. Or, perhaps more probably, ‘ some one of their hearers wrote from their mouths

'those relations. In each of their various audi-
'ences of converts, it may surely be presumed,
'that one person, at least, was competent to per-
'form this service for himself and his companions
'in the faith.

"It is further a matter of reasonable presump-
'tion, that such memorials, records, fragments, or
'whatever we may call them, would be presented
'by the writer to the apostle from whose oral in-
'structions they had been derived; with a request
'for revision and correction. Thus, these detached
'portions of narrative, conversation, or continued
'discourse, would obtain most justly the sanction
'of apostolic authority; and would be preserved,
'read, circulated, copied, and reverenced accord-
'ingly.

"To the Evangelists Mark and Luke, such frag-
'ments would be of immense value. It may be
'presumed, that they diligently collected them,
'that they were able fully to appreciate their
'claims to authenticity, and that they introduced
'those which they knew to be of indubitable au-
'thority into their respective narratives; and some
'of them might, with equally good reason, be in-
'serted by Matthew in his original Syro-Chaldaic
'Gospel. Luke adverts, in plain terms, to a plu-
'rality of sources from which he had deduced his
'information, when he says, that "those who
''from the beginning had been eye witnesses and
''attendants of the word, had delivered" their de-
'clarations; and that he himself "had diligently
''traced up all from the first." When the translator

‘ of Matthew’s Gospel into Greek, whether that was
‘ himself or any other person, found any of these
‘ fragments which corresponded with passages in his
‘ original, he would act properly by availing him-
‘ self of them, and transcribing them into his ver-
‘ sion. This conjecture applies, of course, to the
‘ Greek fragments, which may be presumed to
‘ have been the more numerous of the two classes.

“ The inference from these positions is; that,
‘ where we find the continued verbal agreements in
‘ the three or in two of these sacred writers, we
‘ are reading an authentic Greek fragment, which
‘ each possessed and faithfully inserted in his work;
‘ but that, where we find the coincidences which are
‘ not strictly verbal, but lie in the collocation of
‘ sentences and members of sentences, each of the
‘ writers had before him a copy of the same Syro-
‘ Chaldaic fragment, and translated it into Greek
‘ for his own purpose.”

Now what is this but a theological novel, as much the work of invention as Waverley? There is no more reason to believe that all these suppositions were actually realized, than that Sir Walter Scott gives an authentic history of the attempt of Prince Charles Edward. Is it possible that a writer can be so frantic as to call on his readers to receive conjectures as facts? Must every link of a chain of suppositions be admitted as historical evidence? The novels of Sir Walter Scott do not demand our faith, though they may possess much historical truth; and they give the knowledge of life, manners, and of many things that may be profitable;

but a thousand volumes of such theological romances would not enrich a reader with a single idea. Reasonings founded on conjecture with respect to the things of God, pervert the mind from the true pursuit and the true sources of knowledge. How lamentable to find a Professor in a theological chair, in a seminary professedly evangelical, amusing his students with reveries about the origination of the Gospels, instead of an able exposition of the contents of the Bible! If this is the way in which the English Dissenters are now taught in their Colleges, it will not be surprising if, in process of time, their professors shall amuse the students by mimicking *the trick of the resurrection of Jesus.* Whatever ingenuity a man may discover in devising and harmonizing such theories, a sound mind he cannot possess, and none but fanatics can receive edification.

But granting for a moment, that all these conjectures were matter of fact, of what avail would this theory be for harmonising the evangelists? Would it convert the supposed errors in the gospels into truth? Would it shew that inspiration might communicate a falsehood? "Upon this general basis," say the reviewers, "we understand 'that the Professor whose words we have borrowed, conceives that both the agreements and the 'disagreements, and all the other phenomena of the 'case, may be accounted for; so far as it is in our 'power to account for them." This *basis!* A chain of suppositions! This is a basis without a base. This is truly like the Indian philosopher,

who supported the world on the back of an elephant, and the elephant on the back of a huge tortoise. This theory might, indeed, shew the reason of the coincidences, and the reason of the disagreements. But does this harmonise the discrepancies? Does this shew that all Scripture may be given by inspiration, while the Scriptures abound in errors? To find out the external sources of the gospels, even were it now possible, would be nothing but a matter of mere curiosity. The man who would give two hundred pounds for a Queen Ann's farthing, might value such information. But any man of a well regulated mind, would utterly undervalue such a discovery. Dr Schleiermacher's theory, the reviewers inform us, is essentially the same with that of the English Dissenting Professor; but the intrepidity of our critics begin to fail them, when the German Neologist attempts to harmonise Matthew and Luke, by turning some parts of the accounts into allegories and fables. "But when," say they, "to accomplish the long-felt desideratum 'of harmonising this narrative (of Luke) with that 'in Matthew i. 12.—ii. 23. he brings out the sup-'position, that certain parts in the *narrative* of each 'Evangelist are *poetical allegories*, we feel the 'ground shake under our feet." But had the reviewers been as well acquainted with the country as their profession demanded, they would have left their guide on the edge of the quagmire, instead of accompanying him to the very gulph which now affrights them. They should not have entered the very margin of the regions of conjecture on a theo-

logical subject. And after all, are not the fears of the reviewers either affectation, or cowardice? Is it worse in the German Neologist, to charge a falsehood on the Bible under the decent veil of allegory or instructive fable, than in the reviewers to charge in direct terms, various errors on the accounts of the Evangelists? These young Neological recruits, who have now shewn themselves so nervous at the first fire, will forget their fears, it is to be expected, during the remainder of the engagement. If they have now courage to charge the book of God with errors in dates and combination of facts, the Neologians have no reason to despair, that they will come in time to pronounce, without faultering, "patches of parable and instructive fable."

On the whole, it is evident, that the German Neologians have had their influence even on the evangelical press of England; and that with all the horror expressed with respect to their most extravagant dogmas, there is an attempt to meet them, and a desire to fraternize, as far as possible, in their speculations. The tone of this Review indicates much more complaisance towards the errors of learned ingenuity, then of zeal for the honour of the word of God. A reviewer possessing an apostolic spirit, must have stamped every part of Dr Schleiermachers' work with his strongest reprobation.

REMARKS*

ON

DR PYE SMITH'S THEORY OF INSPIRATION.

Dr Smith's account of inspiration appears to me to proceed on principles at variance with the fundamental laws of biblical interpretation. It founds on theory, and supports itself not by the declarations of the divine word itself, but by the supposition of difficulties and views of necessity. Whatever distance there may be between the inspiration allowed by Dr Haffner, and that contended for by this writer, they both build on the same objectionable foundation, though the religious sentiments of the latter, permit him to ascribe a greater de-

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* These remarks were originally subjoined to a Review of the Rev. Dr. J. Pye Smith's Defence of Dr Haffner of Strasburg's Neological Preface to the Bible. The latter is in this edition omitted, as being unconnected with the subject of Inspiration.

gree of divine assistance. What is the method that just criticism would adopt in ascertaining the nature and extent of inspiration? Undoubtedly it is by arguing, what saith the Scriptures? Whether the Scriptures are inspired at all, and what is the extent of that inspiration, can be learned from no other source. I turn then to 2 Tim. iii. 16, and it immediately gives me full and perfectly satisfactory information. It declares, that "all Scripture 'is given by inspiration of God." Here plenary inspiration is expressly asserted; for what is a *writing* but *words written?* The thoughts and sentiments are the meaning of the words. To say that a *writing* is inspired while the *words* are uninspired, is a contradiction in terms. It is not said that the doctrines of Scripture, or the thoughts and sentiments of Scripture, but that the Scriptures themselves, are given by the inspiration of God. It is of the words as containing the meaning, and not of the meaning as distinguished from the words, that inspiration is directly and expressly asserted. For my own complete satisfaction, I require not an additional particle of evidence. But if, to silence the captiousness of error, I proceed to examine what additional light the Scriptures afford, I am altogether overwhelmed with the mass of evidence brought to bear on the subject. This may be seen fully exhibited in Mr Haldane's Treatise on the Authenticity and Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. As I am not now arguing the point, but only shewing the legitimate mode of procedure, in every question with respect to what is taught in Scripture, I decline giving even

an epitome of that evidence. I shall merely suggest one or two things that may be expressed in a few words. Some things in Scripture must necessarily have been inspired in words, as well as thoughts. All prophecies not understood by the Prophets, must have had such an inspiration. Here, then, we have a key to the nature and extent of inspiration. If any other part of the Scriptures are ascribed to a lower degree of inspiration, we are to believe it; but without this, we are to look on *all* as inspired to the same extent, as the same inspiration is equally asserted of *all*. That there are different degress of inspiration, is not an assertion of the Scriptures themselves, but an arbitrary theory of man. We find again, that the Apostles, on the prospect of appearing before kings and governors, were directed by their Master not to think previously on what they were to say, as they would be supplied with a defence in the moment of trial: "It is not you that speak, but the 'Holy Ghost." Now, if verbal inspiration was communicated on such occasions, surely it would not be withheld from the Scriptures, which are to abide to the end of the world.

But instead of proceeding in this way, to inquire of the Scriptures the nature and extent of their inspiration, Dr S. as if they could not settle the question, invents a theory, and forms an inspiration, varying in extent, agreeably to supposed exigencies, without even alleging the colour of Scriptural authority. A plenary verbal inspiration is *unnecessary,—is attended with difficulties,—detracts*

from the authority of translation,—gives weight to objections from various readings,—therefore, there is not a plenary inspiration. Now, admiting all the premises, all of which I deny, I do not admit the conclusion. Human views of what is unnecessary,—the existence of difficulties,—the degree of authority due to translations,—and the weight of objections from various readings, are not a paramount reason to set aside the evidence of Scripture doctrine: but I shall examine his four objections separately.

"The hypothesis," says Dr Smith, "that, in 'every case (for in some it was evidently neces-'sary) the identical words were infused into the 'mind of the inspired writer, appears to me un-'tenable, for these reasons:" Smith's Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, vol. i. p. 62.

This is not an hypothesis, Dr Smith: it is the express assertion of the Holy Spirit. If Dr S. could shew that the words, 2 Tim. iii. 16, do not imply verbal inspiration, he would show that our interpretation of that passage is wrong; not that our hypothesis is untenable. We form no hypothesis on the subject,—we deny hypothesis,—we abhor hypothesis, with respect to every truth that can be known only by the revelation of God.

"It is an unnecessary supposition. For the di-'vine influence on the mind of the inspired writer 'would as certainly guide the rational faculty of 'expression to the adoption of the *best* and *most* '*suitable* terms and phrases, as if the words were 'dictated to a mere amanuensis."

I have never met a writer who betrays greater indistinctness in his conceptions than this author. I thought the question was, whether *the very words, all the words* originally written in the Scriptures, were inspired as well as the thoughts. Here the question is shifted, and the matter in doubt is supposed to be, whether the words of Scripture were *infused* by the Spirit, or the inspired writers were certainly guided to the adoption of them. Now, if there is any difference between being guided to use a word, and having that word infused into the mind. I do not think that that difference will be of any avail to Dr S.'s theory. If the divine influence on the mind of the inspired writer, has certainly guided the rational faculty of expression to the adoption of the best and most suitable terms and phrases, then the terms and phrases of Scripture are all given by God. Is this any thing akin to the theory, that in some things the words are left to the writers themselves, or that the inspiration is in the thoughts rather than the words? The theory used in practice, and the theory vindicated, are quite different. The former is designed to afford some relief from the supposed consequences of plenary verbal inspiration; the latter, if it is not really such, is exposed to all its objections. The guiding with certainty to the use of a term, secures it as firmly as infusion. What is guiding to the use of a word, but inspiration?

By the assertion that such a mode of inspiration is unnecessary, the author's scheme requires, not

merely that *certain guidance* will supply the place of *infusion*, but that some things do not require verbal inspiration at all. While the thoughts and sentiments are communicated by the Spirit, the writers may clothe them with expression. Now, complete inspiration is necessary as the ultimate resource in securing us that we have the mind of the Spirit. We may indeed have an inspired *thought* in uninspired *words*, as in translations of the Scriptures; but that we have the inspired thought, cannot be known on the highest evidence, but by knowing the inspired words. How can a thought be known, but by the words that express it? And how can we know that the words express the thoughts of the author, if they are not the words of the author? Had the inspired writers been left to themselves, as to the choice of words in any part of their writings, they might have made a bad choice, and inadequately or erroneously represented the mind of the Spirit. The best writer that ever moved a quill, may often fail in expressing his own sentiments. Instances might be given in which the most learned writers mis-state their own meaning, and sometimes convey no meaning at all. Shall the fishermen of Galilee, then, be supposed equal to express themselves with unerring correctness, if left to their own phraseology?

It may be said, that this invalidates the authority of translations of the Scriptures. And I admit that it does imply, that no uninspired translation can have the same authority of the inspired original. But where is the man that has ever raised transla-

tions to such a rank? The universal consent of controversialists takes this for granted, why then should the abettors of verbal inspiration be taken to account on this head? In determining the meaning of all controverted passages, the last appeal is universally to the original. This is the ultimate ground on which certainty of meaning can be affixed. They who cannot have access to the very words which the Holy Spirit has inspired, have not the highest grounds of certainty as to his meaning. The inferiority of the authority of translations to the inspired original, is a fact that all must equally admit. Dr S. himself asks, if Alethia understands German,—supposing this to be a qualification for the adequate ability of deciding with respect to the sentiments contained in Dr Haffner's Preface to the Bible.

But, while all must admit that uninspired translations have an authority inferior to that of the inspired original, no sound critic can question the adequacy of translation for all essential purposes to the unlearned. The Scriptures are not in a worse condition, on this point, than the classics, and all ancient and foreign books. Every one knows, that to understand what is going on in the Continent, the bulk of the people of this country have no essential need for its languages. Nay, a criminal may be tried for his life, upon the testimony of a witness whose meaning can only be known to the court by interpretation. For the general faithfulness of translations, there may be every testimony that, in human affairs, usually determines opinion

on the most important points. Nor is the learned man himself independent of human testimony: on this ground it is that he knows he has the inspired original. And though he has the inspired original, he has not an inspired or infallible knowledge of that original. In many things, then, he will be liable to mistake the inspired meaning. While he has an undoubted and a very great advantage over the illiterate, he is not without difficulty, nor beyond the reach of error. In judging of the fitness of the modes of communicating divine knowledge, incredulity demands evidence that admits no evasion; and learned Christians often desire to indulge them in this humour. But in this they err, not thoroughly knowing the Scriptures, nor the works of creation and providence. In all God's works there is the impression of his own hand;—not, however, so legible, but chicanery may question it, and plausibly ascribe it to forgery. Infidels demand evidence with respect to the Scriptures, not analogical to that in any other of God's works; and when Christians endeavour to satisfy them in this, they compromise the dignity of their God. Is it not enough that men have the same kind and degree of evidence, with respect to the revealed will of God, that determines them in all other things? Must Jehovah shut up every avenue to evasion, before we will deign to accept his mercy? Salvation is our own concern. Shall we then so doat on damnation, that unless one rise from the dead, we will not believe the message of reconciliation? If the unlearned man rejects the Scriptures

because he has not an inspired translation, his own conduct, in all other things, will attest the justice of his eternal condemnation. To convince him of the duty of receiving his English Bible as a revelation from God, there is no need of teaching him the chimerical theory of an inspiration of meaning, abstracted from the words that convey that meaning, that will diffuse itself, with equal facility and equal authority, through all the metaphrases, translations, and commentaries. It will be perfectly sufficient to shew him that he has the same kind of authority on which he rests his knowledge of all countries, ancient and modern,—and on which depend the most momentous concerns of man.

Let it be observed also, that we have greater evidence of the general correctness and sufficiency of translations, than we could have with respect to the phraseology of the inspired writers, had that been left to themselves. Translations are made by the most learned men of their age and country; the inspired writers were generally illiterate, and none of them masters of composition. But what is of higher importance, every error supposed to be committed by the original writers, must remain for ever undiscoverable and irremediable; whereas, if a translation commits an error, it can be corrected by recourse to the original. The inspired original remains a ground-work for reference, with respect to all translations. There can be no such appeal with respect to any blunders of the inspired writers. If they have erred in the choice of a word or phrase, we cannot go up to heaven to have it cor-

rected. The general consent of translations, in representing scriptural truth, is such as to afford evidence of general correctness. It may be said, indeed, that a Bible inspired in thoughts, but uninspired in words, might have been sufficient as to all things essential to salvation, with all the errors contained in the phraseology. I admit it; but would such a Bible be as good a one as that which is verbally inspired? Would such a Bible be God's Scriptures? Could it be said of such a book, that it was all given by inspiration of God? Better to have such a book than no knowledge of salvation, as it would be better to eat bread made of sandy flour, than be starved. But as it would be better to have bread made of pure flour, so it would be better to have an inspired Bible. A Christian going into a heathen country without a copy of the Scriptures, might communicate the knowledge of salvation. But had he with him all the best books that ever were written on Christianity, could they adequately supply the place of the Bible? But what reason can be assigned for such stinginess in the Divine favour? Why does the all-bountiful Author of creation deal out his boons of grace with so niggardly a hand? If he did not employ men to complete his works, why should he to complete his word? Is the Almighty weary in working, that Christians are unwilling to give him unnecessary trouble? Must they enter into minute calculations to ascertain how far they can do without his assistance? Are they determined to refuse from him

every thing which they can hope to want without irreparable loss?

Except it is for the same good-natured purpose, to make the toil of complete inspiration less necessary in God, I cannot see the use of substituting, in some cases, *divine acceptance* of words for *infusion*. According to this scheme there is no need for the inspired writer to trouble the Spirit for the inspiration of every word: On many occasions his own knowledge of phraseology, subject to the Divine inspection, will sufficiently supply him. Such a scheme appears to me too bungling to ascribe to any man of common sense—to ascribe it to Jehovah is, in my view, little less than blasphemy. I acknowledge that if God would accept the words suggested spontaneously, or searched for by the inspired writers, it would come to the same practical issue. A bill accepted is virtually a man's own bill. But to represent a penman of Scripture and the Holy Spirit as working on such a scheme strikes me as so ridiculous, that I cannot look at it but with contempt and abhorrence. Is it to make the work a little easier to Omnipotence, and to save some trouble to Him who wearies not in working, that such a confused and jumbling plan is proposed? What a wonderful interruption in the mental operations of the Apostles when writing or speaking! How many wrong words and phrases, how many inadequate expressions, must be supposed to be presenting themselves to the Holy Spirit for acceptance in the minds of the Apostles! These must all be rejected, and if not replaced by infusion, new ones

must again and again be sought for. If the suitable word is not supplied immediately by the Spirit, the illiterate fishermen might have halted and stammered till eternity, before they would have finished one sermon or one letter. The scheme of acceptance might not have seemed so utterly ridiculous, if God had chosen the most learned men as the writers of Scripture; but with illiterate men, who are almost as ill supplied with terms and phraseology as with ideas, it would be a more tedious process than complete verbal infusion.

This also shews the absurdity of supposing that inspiration of facts, with faithfulness of statement, is all that is necessary for Scripture history. No subject requires a more full supply of phraseology than history. No subject requires more art in the disposing of its matter. So difficult is it, indeed, that few men in all ages have succeeded in it. The historian must be master not only of all things related by him, but he must be supplied with the terms and phraseology that respect all the objects, and all the relations, &c. which are to be represented in his history. Illiterate men have many ideas for which they have no words—learned men themselves are sometimes in the same predicament. Let an illiterate man be inspired with a full knowledge of all the affairs of Britain, throughout all ages, he will still be unfit to write a History of England. He must have a thorough knowledge of the words of the language in which he writes, art to arrange, and what is still more difficult, a fluency of expression, and facility of composition. To

the writers of Scripture history, inspiration of words was as necessary as inspiration of facts. But had they been the most perfect masters of language and composition, to write a history that might be perfectly relied on as a part of the word of God, inspiration of every word was necessary. Let us grant, however, for a moment, that plenary verbal inspiration was not, in our view, essential; is this a reason why we should not receive the obvious testimony of Scripture on this point? Shall we be allowed to be better judges of what is necessary than God? How many things will human wisdom reject in Scripture, if this theory is allowed? Some think a general judgment unnecessary, seeing every man is judged at death; and, according to this theory, they are justifiable in attempting to explain Scripture in conformity with their opinion.

The second objection to plenary inspiration, alleged by Dr S. is—

"It is attended with extreme difficulties. For 'example; in two, or three, of the evangelists, we 'often find the same discourse or sentence of our 'Lord, expressed by each in different words, 'though with precisely the same sense. If, then, 'we demand a verbal inspiration in any one of these 'cases, we destroy the possibility of it with respect 'to the correspondent passage."

Instead of finding extreme difficulties in the things here mentioned, I can feel no respect for the understanding that finds in them any difficulty at all. It is here taken for granted as an

axiom, that two or more accounts of the same thing, differing in phraseology, though substantially agreeing, cannot all be the words of inspiration. Now a very small degree of perspicacity will enable any man to see, that instead of being a necessary truth, this has not the smallest foundation. In relating the same event on several occasions, a narrator may each time use different phraseology; but if his accounts substantially agree, no man will ever charge him with falsehood. A man, even on his oath, being several times called on to relate a fact, will never be found fault with so long as his accounts substantially agree. To attempt exactly the same phraseology, would rather look suspicious. Now, if such is the case among men, why should the Holy Spirit, in relating facts, be bound by different rules? When he speaks in our language, shall he not speak truth, as is required of men? Why should a perfect identity of words be at all aimed at? If the variety of expression in relating the same thing in the gospels, would not affect the truth of the narration, on the supposition that the writers were uninspired men, why should it be thought improper for the Holy Spirit to make use of that variety? Must a different law be prescribed to him when he uses the language of man, from that which binds man himself? The thought is perfectly childish. Let us take as an example one fact differently worded by the four Evangelists—the inscription written over the head of Jesus on the cross: This is Jesus the King of the

Jews, Matth.—The King of the Jews, Mark—This is the King of the Jews, Luke—Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, John. Now I maintain, that as four honest men might have related this fact, with this variety of expression, without any impeachment on their veracity, so may the Holy Spirit. The man who says that it is impossible for any of these accounts but one to be the language of inspiration, virtually asserts that none of them can be the language of truth, but one. If the four accounts are all substantially true, and would not discredit any of four uninspired men, they may, without any disparagement to God, be all the language of the Holy Spirit. In speaking the language of men, his veracity must be tried by the rules of human language. Instead, then, of saying that such a variety of expression in relating this fact, supposes that the words were left to the Evangelists themselves, I will fearlessly assert, that each of the four accounts is verbally the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. If the four accounts are true and reconcileable as the language of men, they are equally true and reconcileable as the language of God. It is a hypercritical fastidiousness that demands from God an identity of expression in narration, which truth never demanded from man. From this variety I deduce a far different doctrine from Dr S. As, in the word of God, I perceive a palpable, I may say a designed variety of expression in relating the same thing, I learn from this, that the God of truth sanctions the great principle that is acknowledged by men in ge-

neral with respect to the nature of truth, and gives not his countenance to that affected morality, that, like Dr Smith's, pretends to find imperfection in the smallest instance of verbal variety. We have the authority of the divine example, that *substantial truth is truth,* with whatever variety it may be expressed. Dr S. tells us that, " in two or three of ' the Evangelists, we often find the same discourse ' or sentence of our Lord, expressed by each, in ' different words, though with precisely the same ' effect." Why, Dr S., should this imply that each may not be the language of the Spirit? If the sense is precisely the same, must the God of truth be forbidden to use a variety of expression, perfectly allowable to man? Yet Dr S., certainly not to the credit of his understanding, infers from the above fact, that, " if we demand a verbal inspiration in ' any one of these cases, we destroy the possibility ' with respect to the correspondent passage." I admit this variety, and yet I demand a verbal inspiration, not merely in some one, but in each of the correspondent passages. Any thing that forbids the verbal inspiration, will affect the truth of the relation. If it is truth as the word of an uninspired historian, it certainly is not less truth as the word of God. Dr S. must have very limited views of possibility, when he imagines an impossibility here. It is evident that there is great confusion in his own mind on this subject. The assertion, with respect to possibility, takes it for granted that variety is contradiction. It is evident also, that he looks on variety of expression, in relating the same thing, as

morally faulty, though not in a degree that deserves notice as respects man. Were there not some jumble in his mind of this kind, variety of expression would never strike him as inconsistent with inspiration.

But I have another observation on the doctrine of this objection. It is here positively asserted, that the verbal inspiration of all the Evangelists but one, is impossible. Now, how does this consist with the language of the first objection? In shewing *infusion of words* to be unnecessary, he takes it for granted that the mind of the inspired writer was *certainly guided* to the *best and most suitable* terms. Now I ask, if the evangelists were guided with *certainty*, by divine influence, to the use of the words and phrases employed by them, in all this variety of expression, is not the Holy Spirit as chargeable with the variety, as if he had directly infused the words? If he is innocent as a *guide*, so is he innocent as an *infuser*. This evidently shews that the writer has formed no distinct views on the subject, but floats among clouds and fogs of his own creation, even in that heavenly climate, where godly simplicity would have found meridian light. One other observation on this objection, and I have done. I admit, for argument sake, that the doctrine of plenary inspiration has great difficulties, though I have demonstrated that it has none. What can my opponent make of the admission? Shall the existence of difficulties be a sufficient reason to deny what the Scriptures, with such a mass of evidence, assert? Then give up the sovereignty of

grace; give up particular redemption; give up the divinity of Christ; give up the Scriptures themselves; give up the existence of God. It is a shame for any man acquainted with theology and science, to talk of difficulties as rendering any sentiment untenable. No important subject is free from difficulties, and some of the most important have the most puzzling difficulties. It is evidently the design of the divine procedure, that such difficulties should try the humility and the faith of God's people, while they are as gins and snares to human wisdom. Yet it is not agreeable, even to the wisdom of this world, to deny a doctrine for having difficulties, even great difficulties. In opposition to Dr S. I maintain, with the greatest confidence of conviction, that rational criticism cannot set aside, by difficulties, any doctrine alleging a foundation in Scripture. Though I had been obliged to leave this objection unanswered,—though Dr S. had given me passages which I could not reconcile with the doctrine of verbal inspiration, I would have trampled on his objection as insufficient. There are many difficulties in the Scriptures that may never be solved by man. A resolution to receive no doctrine that has unsolved difficulties, would be a symptom, not of wisdom, but of weakness.

The third objection is, that " it deprives all ' translations of their claims to the authority of in- ' spiration." Here, again, the author discovers great confusion in his mode of thinking. Though I do not believe the inspiration of translations, yet such a belief does not result from the doctrine of plenary inspiration, with respect to the original. In-

stead of depriving all translations of a claim to inspiration, this doctrine is perfectly compatible with the supposition, that there might be an inspired translation in every language on earth. We may indeed believe the inspiration of the original, and deny the inspiration of every translation that exists; but our denying of the latter, is not influenced by our belief of the former. The question of the inspiration of the original, is not affected by the inspiration or non-inspiration of any translation. But let us hear the reason the author gives why this doctrine deprives translations of the authority of inspiration: "For by the hypothesis the original text alone can possess that authority." We admit, indeed, that our doctrine implies that the words of the original alone are inspired: does Dr S.'s theory suppose the words of translations to be inspired? We admit that the inspired thought of the original may be transfused into an uninspired translation; but that we have the uninspired thought in the translation, we rest on our own knowledge of the original, or on testimony: does Dr Smith's theory give us greater certainty of having the inspired thought? Our doctrine is not more unfavourable to the authority of translations than is his hypothesis. He maintains that the thoughts and sentiments, rather than the words, are to be considered inspired. We maintain, as well as he, that the thoughts and sentiments are inspired, and the words also. Now, in a translation, he thinks the thoughts and sentiments may remain, while the words of the original are left behind. What hin-

ders us from thinking the same thing? He brings out inspired thoughts from *uninspired words;* what can prevent us from doing the same from *inspired words?* In holding the inspiration of words, we do not deny the inspiration of thoughts; but Dr S. holds the inspiration of thoughts, and denies the inspiration of words. The difference between us, then, is not that our doctrine gives less authority as regards translation, but that his hypothesis gives less authority as regards the original itself. Our view does not disparage translations more than his, while his view disparages the inspiration of the Bible. If his view approximates the authority of translations, and that of the original, more nearly than ours, it is not by elevating translation, but by lowering the original. The uninspired words of translations, so far as suitable, are brought to a level with the words of the original, by making both uninspired. How can the belief of the inspiration of the words of the original, lessen the authority of a translation? Has not a translation of inspired words as good a claim to authority, as a translation of uninspired words? Was ever any thing so absurd as to suppose, that a translation must lose a portion of its authority by a claim of verbal inspiration in the original? Will not every person, who impartially reflects a moment, be convinced, that we give a higher authority than our opponents, not only to the original, but also to translations? Translations, according to Dr Smith, are translations of uninspired words; according to us, they are translations of inspired words. The

objection proceeds on the absurd supposition, that the belief of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, necessarily implies the denial of the inspiration of thoughts and sentiments. By whatever process he extracts inspired thoughts from uninspired words, surely by a similar process we may extract inspired thoughts from inspired words. Our translation of a book more fully inspired than his, will surely have as much authority as his, that is the translation of a book not so fully inspired. It is an odd theory, indeed, that to detract from the authority of the original, is to add to that of the translation.

But what can be more logical than Dr Smith's conclusion? Verbal inspiration deprives translations of a claim to inspiration; for our translations are not verbally inspired. This, however, is but a specious sophism. It confounds inspiration of thoughts with inspiration of words. Of what kind of inspiration does this view deprive translations? of words only. But does Dr Smith give inspiration of words to translations? Does his theory give inspiration to translations that he acknowledges to be uninspired? Can his theory give a more full inspiration to the thoughts and sentiments, as contained in translations, than ours? How, then, does verbal inspiration deprive translations of a claim to inspiration? It denies them inspiration in no sense in which Dr Smith claims it. This formidable objection, then, amounts to no more, than that, if the words of Scripture in the original are inspired, they are of more authority than the words of any

uninspired translation, a truth which I suppose no man ever thought of calling in question.

These observations will prepare us to bear the shock of the astounding consequences, that the learned doctor draws from our doctrine. "Hence 'it would follow," says he, "that the general bo-'dy of Christians, who are under a necessity of 'depending on translations, are in fact destitute of 'any inspired Scriptures." What a dreadful abyss is this into which we have plunged the greater part of the Christian world! How wofully have I been mistaken! I had thought that my doctrine on this point was not only equally innocent with that of my opponents, but had consoled myself, that by coming forward in this controversy, I was pleading the cause of both God and his people. But now I find that I am labouring only to deprive the bulk of my fellow-creatures of the inspired Scriptures. Never was there a greater disappointment. But before I admit these frightful consequences, let me make an effort to avoid them. According to our view, it is alleged that the unlearned are destitute of the inspired Scriptures. Destitute they are indeed of an inspired translation of the Scriptures, and destitute in this respect, I presume, as fully on Dr Smith's plan as on ours, and I have shewn something more so. Will Dr Smith have the goodness to point out, in what respects the translation can be called the inspired Scriptures according to his view of inspiration, in which they cannot be so called according to ours? There is a difference of authority, between the original and uninspired

translations. But it is not necessary that I should discuss this in this controversy, Dr Smith and all others must confess this. I presume there never was a Biblical critic so foolish, as to put an uninspired translation on a level with the inspired original. In whatever sense Dr Smith's theory can allow the English Bible to be the inspired Scriptures, our doctrine can allow this in still a higher sense.

But if the objection as to the authority of uninspired translations is valid, then, according to Dr Smith's own views, we have in translations no inspired Scriptures, as far as concerns all those parts in which he admits that verbal inspiration was necessary. He admits the necessity of verbal inspiration, in conveying prophecies not understood by the prophet. Now in translations, either these are not inspired Scriptures, or if they are, all Scripture may have been verbally inspired, yet in translation be considered inspired Scripture. What is true as to any portion, may be true as to the whole. His own admissions, then, refute his theory.

The most formidable view of the objection, however, is still to come. "The consequence," he observes, "will also reach still higher. As the discourses of our Lord were delivered in the vernacular tongue of Judea, the recitals of them in the Greek gospels, cannot be the very words which he used, but must be translations." Here is a tremendous consequence of verbal inspiration. By the wicked doctrine, that God, in revealing his will to men, uses his own words, we deprive not only the unlearned of inspired Scriptures, but we do not

leave a Bible even to the learned themselves. Really I could not have apprehended any such dreadful evil, from allowing God to use his own words in communicating his own mind. It is a shame for a man of learning to throw out sentiments so crude. Surely he ought to have reflected a moment, before he ventured to hazard such paradoxes. Ought not his good sense to have suspected the process of reasoning, that led to draw conclusions so frightful, from premises so harmless. Had he allowed himself cooly to examine his own reasoning, he could not have allowed his mind to be entangled by cobwebs that must break from the lowest exertion of human intellect. I should be surprised if a very child could be imposed on by such reasoning, however unable he might be to unravel the sophistry of it. What is the argument? Our Lord spoke in the vernacular language of Judea, but the gospels relate his discourses in Greek; therefore, on the supposition of verbal inspiration in the speaker, the gospels that speak in Greek cannot be inspired. There is a world of obscurity and silliness in this reasoning. It supposes every translation to be of necessity uninspired. For if it is possible for an inspired translation to be given of an inspired original, why is it taken for granted, that the circumstance of the accounts of our Lord's discourses, being recorded in Greek, forbids the inspiration of those accounts? The words of the evangelist are, indeed, only a translation of the words used by our Lord; but if the Scriptures are inspired, these words are an inspired translation.

What does it concern us, in what language Christ spoke his discourses, if they are recorded to us in an inspired translation? Paul spoke the language of the people whom he addressed,—does this imply that the words that record this in the Acts of the Apostles, are not inspired, because they must be only a translation of the words that Paul used?

But the *consequence* of this objection *works still higher.* Jesus Christ surely spoke by inspiration, his words were verbally the word of God. Now, as we have none of these words, none of his doctrines, but by translation, according to Dr Smith's theory, we are destitute of inspired Scripture with respect to our Lord's doctrine. Should Dr Smith reply, that though we have not the words of Christ, we have the thoughts and sentiments; I subjoin, that this cannot be said by him, consistently with this objection, for that represents verbal inspiration in the original, as destructive of inspiration in the translation. I subjoin further, that if verbal inspiration in Jesus Christ, does not forbid the inspiration of the gospels as to thoughts and sentiments, neither does verbal inspiration in the original, forbid the supposition of having the inspired doctrine of Christ contained in uninspired translations. Dr Smith brings his elephants into the field, but they are so ill disciplined, that instead of trampling down the enemy, they take to flight, and crush his own ranks. The author seems to have lost himself, in an attempt, by a sort of chemical criticism, to reduce all the inspiration of Scripture into the thoughts and sentiments, that

being then sublimated, it may escape evaporation in the words that convey it, and standing wholly unconnected with phraseology, be ready to transfuse itself with equal strength into all other languages, even by uninspired translators.

Granting, however, that a plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures has a more unfavourable aspect towards translations than the opposite sentiment, this is not to be admitted as a paramount objection to a doctrine established by such a weight of evidence from the testimony of God's word. A sound critic would not allow its authority for a moment,—not even in the utmost extent in which it could be supposed true. Whatever are the consequences as to translations, the doctrine of a complete verbal inspiration in the original Scriptures, rests on pillars that hell and earth will never subvert.

The fourth objection that Dr Smith opposes to the doctrine of a plenary verbal inspiration in the Scriptures, is, that—

" It gives a serious weight to the otherwise nu-
' gatory objection against the certainty of the Scrip-
' tures, from the existence of various readings. For
' no person, however well qualified, careful, and im-
' partial, in applying the rules of criticism, could
' assure himself, and still less could he satisfy
' others, that he had in every case ascertained with
' *absolute* certainty, the one genuine reading. But,
' if we regard the inspiration as attaching to the
' matter and sentiments rather than to the letters
' and syllables, the objection is effectually preclud-

'ed. It is not in one instance out of five hundred 'that the diversities of manuscripts and other au- 'thorities produce the smallest alteration in the ul- 'timate sense. Thus, in the general course, it is 'all the same, as to practical effect, which reading 'is accepted: and criticism is called to put forth its 'utmost strength only in these few cases in which 'the meaning is affected."

Upon this I observe, in the first place, that it virtually excludes verbal inspiration in every instance. Whether it is that the naked sentiment is too shocking for the author himself to contemplate, or whether he wishes to disguise it from his readers, he does not avow his sentiment in the same extent in which his theory holds it. He does not deny verbal inspiration flatly;—nay, he admits it in some instances. Here he speaks of inspiration attaching to the matter, rather than to the letters and syllables. But he must mean, not inspiration of matter *rather than* of words, but inspiration of matter, *and not* inspiration of words. The force of the objection applies equally to every instance of verbal inspiration. If there is a single verse in Scripture verbally inspired, this objection lies against the credit of that verse. It must either be kept infallibly as free from corruption by transcribers as it was originally pure, else this objection will crush it with its *serious weight.* Now, there is no part of Scripture infallibly free from corruption by transcribers; therefore, to save the honour of revelation, according to Dr Smith, we cannot suppose an inspired word is in the Bible. But, unfortunately,

this same Dr Smith has admitted, that some parts of Scripture must have been *verbally* inspired; therefore, against all such parts this weighty objection has its full force. My mode of reasoning, whatever may be the canons of Morus, Dœderlein, &c., would be this. As some parts of Scripture must of necessity have been verbally inspired, and as such parts are not better secured against the mistakes of transcribers than the rest, if this objection cannot invalidate the verbal inspiration of the one, neither can it invalidate the inspiration of the other.

Dr Smith's plan for saving the honour of inspiration, reminds me of the way in which the popish persecutors saved the honour of the priesthood; when any of the clergy were to be burned, they stripped them of their office before they committed them to the flames. Just so with Dr Smith and inspiration. To preserve it from disgrace through accidents in transcribing, he removes it from the words of Scripture, and, with all the sublime mystery of the schoolmen, places it incomprehensibly in the thoughts and sentiments. Should any bold unbeliever ask, How can it be known that the inspired sentiment is expressed with infallible correctness, if the words are not also inspired? The best answer is, It is a mystery, it is all a mystery.

But these apprehensions of Dr Smith are altogether visionary. Instead of giving a serious weight to the objection referred to, the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration adds not a particle to its weight. I maintain that it is no way connected with such an

objection; and that to view it in this light, betrays a mind destitute in a more than ordinary degree, of critical discrimination. "No person," it is said, "however well qualified, careful, and impartial, in 'applying the rules of criticism, could assure himself, 'and still less could he satisfy others, that he had in 'every case ascertained, with *absolute* certainty, the 'one genuine reading." Granted; fully granted. But what then? What makes such a thing necessary, in order to defend verbal inspiration? Does the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration imply, that our copies must infallibly contain the pure original in every instance? It does not, Dr Smith. It asserts that the Scriptures, as God gave them, were his, not only in matter, but in every word of them. But this by no means implies, that the present copies are, in every instance, perfectly correspondent with the original. The permanency of the purity of the divine word, was committed to the care of his Providence, in the use of the ordinary means, by which he can always perfectly secure his purposes. There is indeed every reason, *a priori*, to think, that God would not suffer his word to be essentially corrupted; and as Dr Smith himself admits, there is from fact the most satisfactory evidence that he has not permitted it to be materially corrupted. But the doctrine of verbal inspiration has nothing to do with this, whatever may be the extent of corruption by transcribers. If any man were so mad as to argue, that every word in our Greek New Testament is infallibly the same with that originally given by God, the various

readings to which Dr Smith refers, would be an answer to such a madman. But to point to the various readings as an objection to the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, as they came from God, is to confound two things entirely distinct and independent of each other. Nor does our doctrine make a single corruption more than Dr S.'s theory: nor does the assertion, that the original word, whose place the corrupted word now fills, was an inspired word, cause greater incertitude with respect to the true meaning, than the opinion that it was uninspired. On the other hand, this theory, in order to save the Scriptures from the disgrace of losing a few inspired words, degrades them from the rank of verbal inspiration, and leaves us to gather the truth of God out of the words of men. Both of us must acknowledge the fact to the same extent. To suppose that the lost words were God's own words, is no more injury to what remains, than to suppose that they were man's words. On the other hand, this hideous theory robs us of the rapturous consolation, that we have in the original of the Scriptures the very words of God, with the few trifling exceptions alluded to. Would it be a greater benefit to have all the words of Scripture human, than to have them all divine, with the exception of a few unimportant variations? If the loss of a few unimportant words, considered as divine, is an injury to the Bible, is not the loss of all the words of Scripture, as inspired, infinitely a greater loss? To save the loss of some trifling articles, Dr Smith sinks the ship with all its

treasures. To prevent the disgrace of losing a few inspired words, he divests the Scriptures of verbal inspiration. We have incomparably the best Bible. Every word of our Bible was God's, as it was first delivered. Dr Smith's Bible was never any thing but human in language. We have still the same Bible, with a few trifling exceptions. Dr Smith's Bible has lost no divine words, because it never possessed any. The very worst part of our Bible is as good now, as the very best of Dr Smith's ever was.

The doctrine, then, of plenary verbal inspiration, stands clear of every solid objection. All the ingenuity of this learned writer has not been able to devise any thing that will fairly bear on the subject. His objections are so very inapplicable, that I cannot bring myself to believe, that any man of a discriminating mind ever really laboured under their weight. They appear rather to have been sought by study, to justify a sentiment originating in some other cause. They are more like the forced thoughts of declamation, when it strains to make the best of a bad cause, than the serious scruples of a sound mind. Had he given up a fortress committed to him by his sovereign, to forces so inconsiderable, there could not have been found a court-martial in the empire that would not have doomed him to lose his head. The doctrine of verbal inspiration is one of the fortresses committed to Christians by Jesus Christ. Dr Smith cries " mercy," and strikes his colours to a most contemptible enemy, without ever firing a gun. Had he mustered the royal forces,

and come to an actual engagement with the squalid foe, he would have put him to flight at the first fire. He would have found the enemy totally without ammunition. There might be indeed as much powder as would enable him to puff a little, but not to do any execution.

This theory, indeed, is one of the most inexcusable that ever was forged for the interpretation of Scripture. On most occasions men are tempted to form theories from the real difficulties of the case, and from some appearance of Scriptural assertion. Plausible objections may be alleged from the Scriptures against the doctrine of the Trinity itself; and it requires solid criticism to give a satisfactory answer to the Arian in the interpretation of some passages. But against the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, there is not even alleged the assertion of a single passage of the book of God. Does the truth of any thing contained in Scripture, require this theory? Is it called for by any apparent contradiction? Is it the only way to solve some insuperable difficulty? No such thing. Never was error more inexcusable; for never was error less provoked by difficulty, or less sheltered by appearance of Scriptural assertion. Where is the passage that has the most remote appearance of teaching the doctrine contended for by this writer? Frightened by the phantoms that himself has conjured up, to escape them he plunges over a precipice. Plenary verbal inspiration is asserted by the Scriptures, —such inspiration is necessary to perfect security in conveying the mind of the Spirit,—to such in-

spiration there is not in Scripture one even apparently contradictory expression, with such inspiration, there is nothing inconsistent in their contents,—to reject such inspiration, then, on the stress of the objections alleged by this writer, is contrary to the first principles of evidence.

Having now examined the objections on the authority of which Dr Smith rejects the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, I shall attend to his remarks on the noted passage, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, which are as follows:

"That from a child thou hast known the holy writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every writing divinely inspired [is] also profitable for instruction, for conviction [of error], for recovery [to that which is right], for training up in righteousness." It appears to me impossible to establish, from the Greek text alone, so as to preclude all fair objection, either side of the agitated question, whether θεόπνευστος agrees immediately with πασα γραφή, or is (as it is translated in the common version and in many others) a part of the predicate. But I apprehend that the scale is turned in favour of the other construction by the evidence of the venerable Syriac Version, whose antiquity is almost, if not quite, apostolic. It reads, "And that, from thy childhood, thou hast known the holy books," &c.—"for every writing which has been written by the Spirit, is valuable for instruction," &c. The Vulgate confirms this interpretation:—"Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata, utilis est ad docendum," &c. It is evident that the Apostle, in v. 16, resumes distributively what he had before advanced collectively: so that "every writing divinely inspired" is a description by which the apostle designates *each and every one* of the writings comprized under the well-under-

stood collective denomination, τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα, *the holy writings*. Timothy, and every contemporary Jew or Christian, needed no explanation of this phrase. They knew it, as one of the most common terms of usage, to denote the γραφαί, *writings*, or *scriptures*, to which the Lord Jesus was in the habit of referring, as to the ultimate divine authority (e. g. Mat. xxii. 29. xxvi. 54. Luke xxiv. 32.), the searching of which he enjoined (John v. 39.), and which it is impossible to suppose, with any shadow of reason, that he did not design to use in the sense in which he knew that all his hearers would understand him; namely, as expressive of the whole sacred canon of the Jews, for to them "were entrusted the oracles of God." (Rom. iii. 2.) The general tenor of the New Testament most clearly recognizes, under these descriptions, the whole *received* scriptures of the Jewish nation: and, when a particular passage is cited, it is usual to refer to it in the singular number: ἡ γραφη, ἡ γραφη αὕτη, and ἑτέρα γραφη, *the writing*, or *scripture*, *this scripture*, *another scripture*, (John xix. 24, 37. Mark xii. 10.)

Thus the passage before us, though we adopt that construction of θεοπνευστος, which Unitarians generally approve, furnishes the strongest testimony to the *inspiration* of each and every of the books of the Old Testament. The importance of this conclusion, in relation to our present subject, and to every other part of the controversy with the Unitarians, needs not to be pointed out."—*Smith's Testimony to the Messiah*, Vol. i. p. 27, 28.

It is satisfactory to find, that even admitting the translation of the passage preferred by Dr S. to be irrefragably proved, it has no colour of opposition to plenary verbal inspiration. This translation, as plainly as the other, asserts the verbal inspiration of every thing inspired. "Every writing divinely in-

‘ spired,” verbally declares that the writing, that is, the words written, are inspired. If any writing is inspired, the words must of necessity be inspired, because the words are the writing. The Syriac Translation implies this as fully as ours. The Bible is said to be *a writing written by the Spirit of God*. A more express attestation of verbal inspiration could not be found.

The only point of view, then, in which we need examine this translation, is its bearing on the Unitarian controversy. And it is very satisfactory to find, that though he prefers the Unitarian construction of this verse, Dr Smith decidedly opposes the Unitarian import of it. While, therefore, I am happy to find Dr Smith and myself on the same side on this important matter, I will take the liberty to suggest to him a few things to invalidate the reasons of his preference of the Unitarian construction of this verse. Though I blame him very much for his excessive partiality for learned men, and his pernicious theorising on Scripture,—that he is a learned, ingenious, and deeply read theologian, I cheerfully acknowledge, and I would gladly bring him over altogether to the right side. I observe then, in the first place, that if the ambiguity, in the construction of this passage, exists to the extent that Dr Smith alleges, that is to say, if there be a passage in Scripture so ambiguous, that neither the connexion, nor any other resource, furnished by the Scriptures themselves, will fix its definite meaning, I maintain that we are so far without revelation, and

that such a passage of Scripture might as well never have been written. There may be, and there confessedly are, passages in the Bible, which are not understood. But it is not because they contain in themselves what necessarily renders them unintelligible, as Dr Smith virtually asserts respecting the passage in question; an assertion, than which it is not easy to conceive a greater indignity to the language of Holy Writ. If the Scriptures are really such a book, a pope we must have. Surely the word of God was not given but to be understood! And if it does not afford evidence to explain itself, it is not sufficient.

I remark farther, that the Syriac version, and the unanimous consent of all uninspired versions, cannot legitimately be acknowledged as authority to fix the meaning of phraseology indeterminate in itself. They afford us nothing more than the opinion of their authors; and though they lived among the Apostles, if they are not inspired, they may have been mistaken. To justify an opinion as having apostolic authority, it is not enough to shew that it was professed by some person in the age of the Apostles; it must be shewn to have been approved by the Apostles. Some opinions we know to have been entertained by Christians in the very times of the Apostles, which were contrary to the apostolic doctrine. I care not how high is the date of the Syriac version; if it is not inspired, I will take the liberty of questioning its propriety. Still less can I admit the paramount authority of the Vulgate. If we are not prepared to adopt all its errors, let us

not claim its patronage in a particular emergency. A degree of countenance may, no doubt, be claimed from reputable translations, which will be increased by the antiquity, learning, and impartiality of the authors. But it never can be legitimately allowed to be decisive. Such authority is to be referred to, not so much to establish an opinion, as to shew that a translation has not been made for the occasion. If, in supporting any of my opinions, I differ from the common version of the Scriptures, a suspicion ought to rest upon every man's mind, that I have made my translation to cover my opinion. Now, to do away this impression, it is very material for me to shew that I am not singular in the translation; and that others, well acquainted with the language, have adopted the same interpretation, although they did not entertain such opinion. In this way, if the Syriac version actually favoured the Unitarian sentiment with respect to inspiration, it would be of very great importance for them to allege its authority. Such a use may be made of the authority of versions; but a casting vote never can be justly allowed them. If, then, it is impossible to ascertain the construction of these words from the text itself, no uninspired version can ever authoritatively fix it.

If the translation is to be made from the words of the common copies, there seems no difficulty in the construction. The substantive verb is naturally to be understood to each of the adjectives. What reason can be given for giving it to one, and withholding it from the other? And why should

we adopt a various reading in order to create a difficulty? If the substantive verb is to be taken into the text between the two adjectives, it is naturally to be construed with the first, and understood to the last. It is not the natural darkness of the construction that has caused the various interpretation of this passage, but disaffection to the truth contained in it. Men who are conscious of holding opinions that the Scriptures condemn, yet are anxious to obtain the sanction of their authority; or at least, to remove the most conspicuous passages that oppose them, would gladly limit the inspiration of the Holy Book. All their efforts, then, are directed to pervert the testimony of this glorious declaration. If they cannot force it to prevaricate or bear false witness, nothing can protect their impious sentiments from the open reprobation of God.

It may be observed also, that according to the Unitarian construction, the particle *ky* is rather cumbersome than useful. It is very difficult to dispose of it to any good purpose, or to assign it an office in which it will not be troublesome as well as useless. In the translation, "for all divinely inspired Scripture is *even* useful," the word *even*, instead of contributing a portion to the sense, essentially misrepresents it. To translate the conjunction ky *also*, as Dr S. does, is not so bad, but still not at all satisfactory. Its application is dubious,—and its import not easily perceived. It is well known, that on some occasions, it will admit this translation; but to argue, that because it ought, in some places, to have this acceptation, it may

have it in any other, according as it may suit the purposes of the critic, is not sound criticism. To justify such a signification here, it is not enough to produce examples in which it has such a signification; it is necessary also, to produce the authority of similar constructions. This is a canon of criticism which may be easily defended;—a canon, however, little respected by biblical interpreters. What word does Dr S. mean the conjunction to affect? What is the precise effect he understands it to have on the meaning? This unfortunate *ky* in the Unitarian construction, is treated as poor Battier was treated in the 10th Hussars. The royal commission, indeed, has given it a seat at the mess, but all the dignity of that commission has failed to procure it the attention of the company. It is doomed to sit unregarded;—it speaks, but no one hears.

Though I perfectly agree with the learned writer, that the Unitarian interpretation does not follow from the admission of the Unitarian construction of this verse, yet, for the above reasons, I prefer the common translation. And though we can still maintain the fortress, though we give up this out-work, I do not think we ought to give up the most unimportant battery, while we are able to fire a gun from it. A consciousness of sufficient remaining resources, and an affectation of excessive candour, may influence us sometimes to give up to the adversary what is perfectly tenable. It is right to make concessions for a moment, to give

the enemy a more signal defeat. But an inch of Scriptural ground is worth eternal war.

Let us now view this passage on the Unitarian construction. And while I agree with the learned writer in the result, I differ from him in the way of obtaining that result. I have objections to his translation, to his paraphrase, and to his reasoning. His translation is at variance with his reasoning. He very justly argues that the phrase πασα γραφη refers to every book of the Old Testament, as being notoriously the most appropriated to that sense. If so, *every writing* is not adequate as a translation of the above phrase. Though *writing* is a literal translation of γραφη, it is not a proper, because not a determinate translation of it here. For, as in the original, γραφη is here taken in its appropriate sense, its translation must correspond to it, not in its literal, but in its appropriate sense. As *writing* has not such an appropriation in English, it is not an adequate translation, although perfectly literal. *Scripture* ought to have been the word, for it has in English exactly the same appropriated meaning that γραφη has in the original. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a translation is good, according as it is literal. It may be asserted, without exception, that a literal translation of any book cannot be a faithful one. If the word is not used in its literal sense in the original, it is a mistranslation of it to translate it literally. This is a canon of biblical interpretation of universal application, and of the greatest moment—a canon not only often violated, but to violate which is, in the estima-

tion of some translators, the highest praise. A translation of this kind, instead of conveying the original with additional light, is perfectly unintelligible. When *ta iera grammata* is translated *holy writings*, as Dr S. translates the words, there is not the smallest objection; because what is indefinite in the word *writings*, is rendered completely definite by the epithet *holy*. His language can bear this, and *holy writ*, and the *sacred writings*, are phrases as definite as the appropriated word *Scriptures*.

Dr Smith justly understands *Theopneustos* as descriptive of *pasa graphe*. But it is not descriptive of it when translated *every writing;* because every writing is not *Theopneustos*, inspired. It is descriptive of *graphe* only in the appropriated sense of that term. *Every scripture* is divinely inspired, but *every writing* is not. According to Dr Smith's translation, it is essentially necessary to understand *Theopneustos* not as a description, but as a limitation—not *every writing*, because it is divinely inspired, but *every writing* that is inspired, or as far as it is inspired. Dr Smith's translation, then, is at war with his sense of the passage.

I have an objection also to his paraphrase. The supplementary matter connecting *pasa graphe* with the assertion *is divinely inspired*, ought not to be *which is*, but *because it is*, or *as being*, or some phrase assigning a reason. The Vulgate, indeed, adopts this construction, but it does not sanction this interpretation. " *Omnis Scriptura divi-*

'*nitus inspirata*," ought not to be translated, "All Scripture *which is* divinely inspired," but "All Scripture divinely inspired," and should be paraphrased *as it is* divinely inspired, or by some supplementary words indicative of description. As the Vulgate does not design to exclude the inspiration from any part of Scripture, but to assign the reason of the reading of it being profitable, the supplement should not be a limiting phrase, but a descriptive one. "All Scripture, *because it is* in-'spired by God, is profitable," &c. The Syriac version is not an exact translation, according to any reading of the text; it is rather a paraphrase. If, in the expression, "Every writing which has 'been written by the Spirit," the phrase *every writing* is understood in its general sense, then the passage cannot be descriptive; for *every writing* is not divinely inspired. If by *every writing* is meant every book of Scripture, as Dr Smith seems to understand the translation, then the translation into English should not have been *every writing*, but *every Scripture*.

Dr Smith states, very correctly, that the terms *graphe*, *graphai*, and *iera grammata*, are all appropriated, in the most decided and notorious manner, to signify the inspired writings of the Old Testament; and he reasons, very justly, that it is impossible for it to have any other signification here, as Timothy, and every Jew or Christian, needed no explanation of these phrases. This is a most decisive and conclusive argument against all those who, with Dr Smith himself, object to the inspi-

ration of particular passages in books confessedly inspired; but I object to the conclusiveness of his reasoning, when he rests on this fact, the certainty of the inspiration of "each and every of the books 'of the Old Testament." In my judgment, the decidedly appropriated sense of the term *graphe*, can afford no assistance in proving that these books were inspired. A Unitarian may reply, "I fully 'grant that these phrases designate the books of 'the Old Testament, but I deny that this admits 'their inspiration. For any thing that can be 'learned from the appropriations, there may not 'be a line of inspiration in the whole." Now, to such a man I have nothing to reply. With respect to the passage under consideration, the Unitarian might observe, "I acknowledge that Paul here 'uses the term *graphe* in its appropriated sense; 'he does not, however, assert inspiration of *all* '*Scripture*, but that all Scripture which is inspir-'ed is profitable," &c. Now, that his reasoning is false, is not proved by reference to the appropriated meaning of *graphe*, nor from the paraphrase by which he expresses his meaning of the text, in which also he agrees with Dr Smith, but by shewing, as I have done, the true and natural supplementary matter to be descriptive, and not limiting. That this interpretation of the Unitarian is false, might also be solidly proved by the absurdity to which it leads. It supposes that there must be a standard or criterion by which, in reading the Scriptures, we may distinguish what is inspired from what is uninspired. If there is no such

criterion, we cannot make the proper use of what is inspired. Now, as no such criterion is given in Scripture, there cannot be need for such criterion. This is an axiom—the man who refuses it is not worth reasoning with; he ought to be given up as a hypochondriac, or as a man who perversely denies first principles, without which there can be no reasoning. If it is said that we may form a criterion for ourselves, I reply that such criterion may be false; and at best, is but human, and can have no authority with ourselves, and much less with others.

While, therefore, I hold with Dr Smith, "that 'the passage before us, though we adopt that 'construction of *Theopneustos*, which Unitarians 'generally approve, furnishes the strongest testimo-'ny to the *inspiration* of each and every of the 'books of the Old Testament," I do not think that the strength of the evidence is brought out in his translation, or paraphrase or reasoning.

But it is not only of advantage, it seems to have the Bible disincumbered of a useless load of inspiration as to words; it will be still more eminently improved, by expelling inspiration from those trivial unimportant passages, in which the inspired writers have impertinently foisted in matters too undignified for divine influences. Dr S. quotes the following passage from Parry on Inspiration.

"If the inspiration and guidance of the Spirit, respecting the writers of the New Testament, extended only to what appears to be its proper province, matters of a religious and moral nature; then there is no necessity to ask, whether *every*

thing contained in their writings were suggested immediately by the Spirit or not: whether Luke were inspired to say, that the ship in which he sailed with Paul, was wrecked on the island of Melita, (Acts xxviii. 1.): or whether Paul were under the guidance of the Spirit, in directing Timothy to bring with him the cloak which he left at Troas, and the books, but especially the parchments, (2 Tim. iv. 13.); for the answer is obvious, these were not things of a religious nature, and no inspiration was necessary concerning them. The inspired writers sometimes mention common occurrences or things in an incidental manner, as any other plain and faithful men might do. Although, therefore, such things may be found in parts of the evangelic history, or in epistles addressed to churches or individuals, and may stand connected with important declarations concerning Christian doctrine or duty, yet it is not necessary to suppose, that they were under any *supernatural* influence in mentioning such common or civil affairs, though they were, as to all the sentiments they inculcated respecting religion."—*Vol. p.* 65.

Now, to refute this impious theory, nothing more is required, than to quote Dr S.'s observations on 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.; and to me it is perfectly astonishing, that the learned writer did not see the inconsistency between this and his views of that important passage. If "each and every of the books 'of Scripture" are inspired, how is it that any part of these books can be uninspired? This is a problem that Dr S. must solve, for he holds both sides of the contradiction. If "all Scripture" is inspired, nothing uninspired can belong to writings called Scripture. We have only to enquire, then, whether such things are found in books called Scripture, of which, without exception, inspiration is asserted:

but to say that a book is inspired, and that a part of it is uninspired, is a contradiction. That may be true of a part which is not true of the whole; but what is true of the whole, must be true of every part. The doctrine here inculcated, then, is not only untrue, but absurd.

The proper province of inspiration, as we are told, is confined to things of a moral and religious nature. The proper province of inspiration, I maintain, is every part of a book declared by God to be inspired. It is the proper province of every writer to be pledged for every thing in the book which he authenticates by his name. Would I permit an amanuensis to foist in, under my name, every thing he chose to communicate to the public? And if I adopt any thing from him, am I not pledged for it as my own? Shall the inspired writers, then, take a liberty with God, that would be utterly unwarrantable with man? Is it not the province of God to be the author of every part of the book which he recognises as his own writing? For an amanuensis to foist in any thing not inspired, would be downright forgery. If there are some things unfit for inspiration, such things should not have a place among things inspired, so as to make a part of a book of which inspiration is, without exception, asserted. Had God permitted such a heterogeneous mixture to be given to the world, than which nothing can be more absurd to suppose, he would not have allowed the whole to be designated by his name. And he would doubtless have given a criterion to distinguish what is divine from what is

human. That no such thing is the case, beside the absurdity of the thing, there is the highest evidence in the fact, that no such criterion is given by God. But what God has not done, Mr Parry has kindly condescended to perform for him. Impious mortals! will men never learn to give the Almighty his own place? Will the Pharisees never cease, by their traditions, to make void the law of God? Were such a discrimination necessary in the book of God, would it be left to men to form the criterion? If such a creterion is necessary in reading the Scriptures, and if no such criterion is given, the Scriptures are an insufficient rule. Why shall we not, then, admit the traditions of papal Rome, as well as the theories of presumptuous Protestant theologians? If Mr Parry has a right to make one criterion, has not Dr Priestly a right to make another? If the former is permitted, by his theory, to purge the Scriptures of certain useless though harmless excrescences, shall not the latter be equally entitled to devise a theory, that will expel all doctrines supposed to be derogatory to human understanding? If the smallest license of this kind is permitted, nothing shall be left as God's in the Scriptures, that atheistical impudence shall think fit to question. The inspiration of Luke in writing the account of the shipwreck, and that of Paul in writing for the cloak and parchments, stand on the same foundation as their inspiration in recording the plan of salvation. Nor are these facts, and all similar ones, destitute of religious instruction. But to be able to shew this is not necessary for the vin-

dication of their inspiration. That they are inspired, is ascertained by their being found in a book that is divinely attested as inspired. The plan that sound criticism would pursue, is not to read in order to discriminate in the Scriptures by a human theory, what is divine from what is human, but to read every verse as the dictate of God, and endeavour to find out the religious use that the Holy Spirit intended that we should derive from it. Admitting that in some things we should not be successful, whether is it more rational to reject such things as not being given by inspiration of God, or to suppose that the divine word may contain treasures that we are not able perfectly to exhaust? Is it modest to say, that a passage can have no religious use, if we cannot immediately perceive that use? No, it is not modest, it is atheistical, it is irrational. For my own part, there is not one of those parts of Scripture, that human wisdom has objected to, in which I have not admired the divine wisdom. Instruction is abundantly conveyed in them, and in a way that shows the Scriptures to be divine. One of these passages, (2 Tim. iv. 13.) that this learned writer is unwilling to dignify as a part of the revelation of God, I have known a very learned clergyman of the Church of England, Dr Stokes, to choose as the text of a sermon, which he preached at a visitation of the Bishop of Derry. That in which Mr Parry and Dr Smith can find no religious instruction, Dr Stokes, as learned as any of them, considered as full of instruction for all the clergy of a diocese. And, in-

deed, many of these things that captiousness and learned ignorance are so much inclined to disrelish, may be shewn to be the most conspicuous indications of authenticity. God hath said, "The meek ' will I guide in judgment." Is it any wonder, then, that men who search the Scriptures with the arrogance of inquisitors, should, as to the wisdom and application of many things, be sent empty away? These haughty doctors do not sit humbly at the feet of Jesus to learn, but with their self-invented standards, impiously seat themselves above him.

"This view of the subject," we are told, "will also enable a plain Christian, in reading his New Testament, to distinguish what he is to consider as inspired truth. Every thing which the Apostles have written or taught concerning Christianity; every thing which teaches him a religious sentiment or a branch of duty, he must consider as divinely true, as the mind and will of God, recorded under the direction and guidance of his Spirit. It is not necessary that he should inquire, whether what the Apostles taught be true. All that he has to search after is, their meaning; and when he understands what they meant, he may rest assured, that meaning is consistent with the will of God, is divine infallible truth. The testimony of men who spoke and wrote by the Spirit of God, is the testimony of God himself; and the testimony of the God of Truth is the strongest, and most indubitable of all demonstration."

What silliness, arrogance, and impiety is here! And have plain Christians for eighteen centuries been reading the Scriptures, in which some things are divine, and some things are human, without any

criterion to distinguish? Has this ingenious divine succeeded at last in discovering the longitude? Was the world in darkness till the rising of this star? What pity that the author had not been born many ages sooner! What a loss to mankind, that *his view* was so long in making its appearance! The want of this discovery, has subjected plain Christians in all the previous ages of Christianity, to confound the word of God with what is merely human. Can there be an instance of more insufferable arrogance and folly? A view that suggests itself after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, is necessary to enable men to read the Bible so as to ascertain what in it belongs to God! Without this, men cannot properly discriminate what is the Bible! And dare any wretched mortal presume to give a criterion of discrimination, in determining the authority of what is contained in the book of God? Impious men, give your assistance to the Almighty and the all-wise in the plans of creation and providence, where your folly cannot mar the comfort of the plain Christian. But foist not your theories on the volume that contains the words of eternal life, and the instructions of heavenly wisdom. Rob not the unlearned Christian of the cheering conviction, that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Let your impious ingenuity gather laurels in the legitimate fields of invention; try your powers in the arts and sciences, and by your sagacity rival the glory of the inventor of the steam engine. But leave the poor Christian his Bible whole and entire.

Seek not to bewilder him by your *ignis fatuus*,—darken him not by your discoveries,—impoverish him not, by bestowing on him your riches. I have no language in which I can adequately express my abhorrence of such a theory, while it is impossible to restrain emotions of contempt for its folly. What blasphemy and absurdity are implied in the idea of a plan for enabling plain Christians to distinguish what belongs to God, in the book that God himself calls his own word! Can the man who has made, or those who adopt this theory, quarrel with Arians, who give a similar new guide to direct plain Christians to discriminate in the Scriptures what is important or fundamental truth, from what is uncertain, unimportant, and speculative? Nothing, say they, can be fundamental truth, but what is found in each of the gospels. By such infidel criterions, men continue to reprobate every thing in the Scriptures which they dislike.

But of what service is this theory, even were it admitted? It is utterly indefinite. What will appear to have religious instruction to one, will have none to another; and as every man must be guided in this by his own view, every one will have a Bible longer or shorter according to his opinions and taste. Besides, on such points there will be no possibility of coming to one judgment, for there is no common standard. That which these two learned theologians look on as so utterly without interest, we have seen another writer, equally learned, admiring as a manifestation of divine wisdom, and a proof of the divine perfection of the book of God. And how

easy will it be, according to this scheme, to discredit any part of Scripture, by alleging that it is only a matter of speculation, not of essential faith? Were all men to adopt this theory, they would be as far as ever from being brought to agreement by it.

Upon the supposition, that the "common and 'civil affairs" mentioned in the Scriptures, are to be considered in no point of view as things of a religious nature, and consequently not inspired, there is a door opened for the introduction into the book of God, of as much uninspired matter as the discretion of the writers might think fit to insert. If, without inspiration, they might introduce one sentence or observation, they might have added a thousand volumes on the same principle. What havoc does this theory make on the word of God?

This discovery is also applied to settle the question, with respect to the inspiration of Paul, in what is taught in the seventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

"The above view of the apostolic inspiration will likewise enable us, as I apprehend, to understand the Apostle Paul, in the seventh chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, where in some verses he seems to speak as if he were not inspired, and in others as if he were. Concerning some things, he saith, "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment:" (ver. 6.) and again, "I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." (ver. 25.) The subject of which the Apostle here delivers his opinion, was a matter of Christian prudence, in which the

Corinthians had desired his advice. But it was not a part of religious sentiment or practice; it was not a branch of Christian doctrine or duty, but merely a casuistical question of prudence, with relation to the distress which persecution then occasioned. Paul, therefore, agreeably to their request, gives them his opinion as a faithful man: but he guards them against supposing, that he was under divine inspiration in that opinion, lest their consciences should be shackled, and leaves them at liberty to follow his advice or not, as they might find convenient. Yet he intimates that he had "the Spirit of the Lord" as a Christian teacher; that he had not said any thing contrary to his will; and that the opinion which he gave was, on the whole, advisable "in the present distress." But the Apostle's declaration, that as to this particular matter, he spoke "by permission, and not of commandment," strongly implies, that in other things, in things really of a religious nature, he did speak by commandment from the Lord. Accordingly, in the same chapter, when he had occasion to speak of what was matter of moral duty, he immediately claimed to be under divine direction in what he wrote. "And unto the married I command, yet not I but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband." (1 Cor. vii. 10.) This would be a breach of one of the chief obligations of morality, and therefore Paul interdicts it under the divine authority. Respecting indifferent things, he gave his judgment as a wise and faithful friend; but respecting the things of religion, he spake and wrote as an Apostle of Jesus Christ, under the direction and guidance of his Spirit." —*Parry's Inquiry, p.* 26—30.

A very satisfactory defence of the inspiration of the Apostle on this occasion, may be found in the "*Authenticity and Inspiration of the Scriptures,*" by Mr Haldane,—a defence so full, as, in my ap-

prehension, not to admit a single additional observation. But in order to cut down these impious theories, I will, for argument's sake, admit the failure, and shew that even this does not concede the consequence with respect to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. If the Apostle guards us against the supposition of his inspiration on this point, then, doubtless, every thing is to be taken as inspired, when there is no such intimation. The message about the cloak and the parchments, the medical advice to Timothy, and the many common and trivial incidents mentioned in his letters, have their claims to inspiration more fully authenticated. All we lose is inspired direction on one point, in which, according to the hypothesis, inspiration is expressly disclaimed. But I go further. Admitting that Paul disclaims inspiration on this point, I maintain that the chapter containing the admission, as a part of Scripture, is inspired equally with any chapter in the Bible. Though he were not inspired to decide the question, he was inspired to write the account which he has given of the matter. If the Apostle has told us that he is not inspired on this point, he has been inspired to make the denial. Not a line has he written in that chapter, that is not immediately from the Holy Ghost. Gamaliel was not inspired, but inspiration has recorded his advice; and that document, as recorded by the Holy Spirit, suggests inspired instruction to us.

Dr Smith, you are engaged in a very unholy cause,—your genius and learning are very ill employed. By excluding the Song of Solomon, you

unsettle the canon of Scripture, and unhinge the mind of simple Christians, by your speculations. You have denied the verbal inspiration of the word of God, and every kind of inspiration to all the passages that any one may chuse to consider not of a religious or moral nature. Your speculations are very crude,—your sentiments are self-contradictory,—and your half-formed conceptions shew that you have been too hasty in giving your opinions to the world. You must go back or forward,—stationary you cannot remain. Make the best use of your learning, but humble yourself before God, and seek more of the teaching of his Spirit in the reading of his word. Without much learning, it is impossible to be a Biblical critic; but all the learning of Bentley will be insufficient, without that child-like disposition of the wisdom given from on high, which teaches to cry, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, is a better model for a Christian minister than Dr Haffner, the learned professor of Strasburgh.

As might be expected, the unhallowed theory of inspiration adopted by Dr Smith, leads to a devastation of the Scriptures, to which no bounds can be assigned. It is a gangrene that will gradually spread until it eats the very vitals of Christianity. Inspiration is first denied to the words, next to such things as relate to common and civil affairs: from this the progress to the non-inspiration of whole books of Scripture is perfectly easy and natural. So far, it appears, the disease has spread its baleful contagion in some professedly evangelical wri-

ters of the present day. An article has appeared in the Ecclectic Review for November 1825,* in which the inspiration of several books of Scripture is denied; and, as has been stated in the Edinburgh Christian Instructor, the divine origin of no less than one hundred and forty chapters of the Bible has been impugned. In this article we have the following passage.

"If the books of Proverbs and Solomon's Song can be proved to be inspired, it is not, we apprehend, on the ground of either external or internal evidence, but on that of the inspired character attaching to their royal author. That God was the author of his wisdom, we know, as the Holy Spirit is the author of all true wisdom, the inspirer of "all good counsels" as well as of "all holy desires and just works." But, whether he was "moved by the Holy Ghost" in penning those compositions, or rather in speaking the proverbs ascribed to him, is not so certain as to rank among articles of faith. There appears to us far stronger ground for believing that "Ezra the priest, the scribe," acted and spake under the guidance of inspiration; but it is observable, that he is never spoken of as a prophet, nor does he lay claim to that character. Even, however, admitting both Solomon and Ezra to have been inspired men, it would be very difficult, we conceive, to prove, that this character attached to the anonymous authors of the book of Esther and the books of Chronicles. We must therefore still contend, that these books, though very properly included in our canon as both authentic and

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* In the first edition of this Review, it was stated, that Dr Smith was said to be the author of this paper. But that gentleman has disclaimed it. I wish I could also add that he disclaims all tampering with the Sacred Canon.

true, " are possibly not inspired;" and that the question whether they are so or not, comes within the proper range of human opinion."

To enter into the proof of the inspiration of these books, so rashly questioned by this writer, would be altogether a waste of time in this place. It will be perfectly sufficient to shew that Dr Smith cannot consistently question it. The business may be effectually done from his own admissions. He strongly contends that 2 Tim. iii. 15. 16, asserts the inspiration *of each and every* of the books comprised under the well understood collective denomination, *Ta iera grammata*, the Holy Writings: and that even the Unitarian construction of that passage furnishes " the strongest testimony to the inspiration of each and every of the books of the Old Testament." Now we have only to ask, were the above books a part of the Old Testament when Paul wrote that Epistle, in order to be completely assured that they are inspired? Were they a part of that collection called Scripture, the Scriptures, the Holy Scriptures, the oracles of God, &c.? If they were, their inspiration is unquestionable. To settle this question, it is only necessary to know the Jewish canon. If Dr S. can deny the inspiration of any book of the Old Testament, in accordance with his own explanation of 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. it requires more perspicacity than I possess, to discern the agreement. Should he say that he cannot see any thing in these books that can entitle them to the denomination, Scripture, Holy Writings, oracles of God, &c.; this might be

very becoming in the mouth of an infidel, but is very inconsistent in the mouth of him who admits them to be a part of the Jewish Canon; and who applies the assertion of Paul, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, to every part of that canon. Nothing can be more absurd than to apply Paul's assertion of inspiration to each and every book of a well known collective denomination, and afterwards to refuse it to certain books unquestionably contained in that collection. Can they be a part of the collection, and not deserve the commendation bestowed on every part of that collection? How can he refuse them the denomination of Scripture, after saying that the meaning of that well understood collective denomination, every Jew and Christian recognised as including *the Scriptures to which Jesus was in the habit of referring, as to the ultimate divine authority?* How can he question the inspiration of some books of the Old Testament, after asserting that 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. furnishes the strongest testimony to the *inspiration* of each and every of the books of the Old Testament? Were not these books, books of the Old Testament? To admit the canon to apply (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.) to every book of the canon, and yet to question the inspiration of some of the books of that canon, would be an instance of absurdity and contradiction to be matched only in the doctrine of transubstantiation. A deist might consistently admit the canon, and labour to shew, from the contents of any particular book, that it could not be inspired. This would not only be consistent, but effectually serviceable to

his cause. Could he succeed in shewing that a certain book belongs to the collective denomination received by the Jews as Scripture; and that it contained evidence of non-inspiration, he would prove Paul a liar, (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.) and discredit the inspiration of every other book in the canon. If one part of the volume attested as inspired by Paul, be proved to be uninspired, his attestation is worthless with respect to every book in the collection. The writer of this article then, is not only inconsistent with Dr Smith in this matter, but actually labours in the cause of infidelity, with respect to Revelation in general. As far as the authority of the canon, and the general attestation of inspiration are concerned, both the authenticity and inspiration of the whole Scriptures are subverted. For if the canon has admitted one uninspired book, there is no security that it has not admitted more: if that canon has been recognised by Jesus with one uninspired book, every book in the collection may be uninspired, notwithstanding that recognition: if Paul (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.) asserts inspiration of the whole volume, while one book is uninspired, no book in the volume can be allowed currency from his stamp. If he has sealed one forgery, the great seals should be put in other hands. I am unwilling to suspect Dr Smith of secretly designing to undermine the authority of the Scripture; yet as he excludes the Song of Solomon, I cannot clear him, but at the expense of his judgment. I cannot see how a man of sound understanding can apply 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. to each and every book of

a collection, while he denies inspiration to any book, unquestionably contained in that collection.

The doctrine of the writer of the article under review, is a perfect absurdity. He tells us, that the book of Esther, and the books of Chronicles, though not inspired, are "very properly included 'in our canon, as both authentic and true." Now, what canon? The answer is self-evident: Canon of Scripture. What other canon is the writer here concerned with? Included in the canon of Scripture, while they are not Scripture! Included in a canon to which they do not belong! Included in the canon of inspired books, while they are not inspired! As well may the writer be included in the peerage, while he is not a peer, or be enrolled among crowned heads, while he is but a subject. Include the writings of men among the writings of God, under one designation! Was ever absurdity more monstrous? I had thought that the Church of Rome had exhausted all the mines of absurdity; but it seems there are some rich veins of unappropriated ore, left to be worked by Protestant divines for the support of sophistry. The authenticity of a book does not entitle it to be taken into the canon of Scripture. Mathematical demonstrations have no more right to a place in the canon of the holy books, than the most extravagant romance. They are truths, but they are not the truths written by the Spirit of God, for the spiritual instruction of mankind. The Jewish canon was the canon of Scripture, not the canon of authentic books in general. Our canon is the canon of the books

acknowledged as inspired, not the canon of all true history; the writer's canon would include all the authentic history of all ages and countries. Is not a canon a rule? And what rule ought any uninspired book to be in the things of God? Now, let me ask him, could you seriously think of placing in our Bible all authentic records? If not, why do you give a place to the book of Esther, and the books of the Chronicles, which in your opinion are uninspired? Would you call such a collection the Bible, the Scriptures, the Holy Scriptures, &c.? I thank thee, great Jesus, that thou hast not left the making of our Bible to the ingenuity of learned doctors. Much of thy wisdom in it, appears to them to be folly. Their learning is employed in mending thy work, and polishing what thy hand has left unfinished. Go, vain man, enrol thy name with that of him, who, in the arrogance of his wisdom, boasted that he could have given a better model for creation, had he been admitted to the divine counsels. But let the Bible alone. It is the very wisdom of wisdom. The blemishes that the wisdom of this world finds in it, are often its greatest excellencies.

Let us examine a little farther this writer's principles of evidence, as furnished by this passage. Though he denies these books as inspired, he acknowledges them as *authentic and true*. Now, how does he know them to be authentic and true, independently of their being a part of the canon, whose inspiration is asserted by Paul? Who is the voucher for the *wicked Jew* who wrote the

book of Esther? What other authentic documents prove every part of this narrative? If there is a single fact in it uncorroborated by other unsuspicious testimony, it stands unaccredited, and the admitted wickedness of its author levels it to the rank of a romance. If it was written by a wicked Jew, we may be sure that he has falsified. We cannot depend on a single fact recorded. Was it ever known that a wicked Jew could write a page of truth, when the interest of his country would be served by a lie? Believe the narrative of a wicked Jew about his religion and country? Go, then, to the Jesuits for the authentic annals of Christianity. Swallow all the fables of popish miracles. Receive, as the truth of God, every adventure in the lives and legends of the saints. Then, that the renowned St Dunstan held the devil by the nose, at the door of his cave, till he made all the rocks, hills, and vallies to re-echo his horrible bellowing, will become a matter of sober history.

How very easily is this writer satisfied with evidence of authenticity, contrasted with his obstinacy with respect to inspiration. Inspiration he denies to these books, though they are part of a canon, to the whole of which inspiration is expressly ascribed by an inspired apostle. Their authenticity he grants without evidence, though, abstracted from their inspiration, there is the strongest reason to suspect them of imposture. Now, my view of evidence leads me to admit their inspiration, from their being part of a canon, to every part of which inspiration is ascribed by an Apostle, and to

recognize their authenticity, as they are inspired. Their being in the canon, is the chief proof of their authenticity. Of the authenticity of some books, there might be no other evidence than the fact that they are in the canon. I know the history of the Old Testament to be true, because it is inspired; take away its inspiration, and you remove the strongest evidence of its authenticity.

Now, instead of resting the whole proof of the inspiration of these books on the general inspired character of their author, I rest no part of it on this ground. Indeed, the evidence that Solomon was an inspired man, is, that he wrote these books. Even had we known him to have unquestionably written books acknowledged by all to be inspired, we would not rest the inspiration of these books on that ground. This argument might go a certain length towards proof; but the main evidence would be, that these books were a part of the Jewish canon, recognised by our Lord, and to every part of which inspiration is ascribed by the Apostle Paul. There may be additional evidences, external and internal, but this is a pivot, that without any other support, will bear the whole weight of their inspiration. That Solomon was "moved by 'the Holy Ghost in penning these compositions," is matter of Christian faith, as well as that Paul was so moved to write his epistles.

It would be still more difficult, in this writer's estimation to prove the inspiration of the book of Esther, and the books of Chronicles. Not in the least more difficult. Do they belong to the canon, *each* and *every*

book of which is asserted by Paul to be inspired? Here is no second question. The author appears to labour under a mistake with respect to the nature of the proof of inspiration. He appears to make little or no account of the authority of the canon, though authenticated by the highest possible sanction. After the fullest evidence of such a title, other evidence, external and internal, seems to be considered as assential before its recognition. Now, to me it is quite obvious, that when a book has the authority of the canon so augustly sanctioned, it needs to a Christian no other recommendation. To him it ceases to stand on its trial. To question it further, is to suspect the guarantee of Jesus and his Apostles. We may add to its proofs, for the sake of confounding infidelity; but to refuse our own assent till they are produced, is most criminal unbelief.

With respect to internal evidence, nothing can be more satisfactory than when a book of Scripture, by the nature and excellence of its contents, proves its origin to be divine. This is eminently to be found in the holy books. But let it be observed, that this is not essential in every book, and that the nature of some books altogether precludes it. Books of genealogies, and other matters, have their use in the inspired volume. But how could genealogical tables prove the inspiration by internal evidence? These tables may be taken verbally and literally from public documents; but as they are inserted in the inspired volume, they have the seal of inspiration. Internal evidence, essentially re-

quisite in a revelation, is only negative. A divinely inspired book can contain nothing that is inconsistent with the divine perfections, as revealed in the gospel. But when a book is proved by external evidence, it is absurd to suppose that it can contain internal evidence to disprove itself. When, therefore, a book is proved by external evidence to be inspired, wisdom directs us to be very cautious in pronouncing its contents to be unfit for the matter of revelation. Such a book could not have external evidence. To judge rashly in this way, is to rush on the buckler of the Almighty. It is the very sin of our first parents,—the sin that the wicked one is still prompting men to commit,—to be as gods, knowing good and evil. Does vain man consider himself a perfect judge of what in all cases is fit for God to write? Is he able to give counsel to the perfection of wisdom? Must revelation come up in all things to his ideas of propriety? Must the Almighty conform himself to his standard? How disgusting to the mind of an humble Christian, to hear presumptuous men dictating on the nature of divine revelation, as if they were equal to God? Their pure minds take offence at the grossness of the word of him in whose sight the heavens are not pure. It is awful presumption to pretend to be disgusted with the Song of Solomon, when it is found in the canon of the word of God. Whatever my own judgment might be, if left to determine, *a priori*, of the nature of this book, when I find it among the books that composed the Jewish canon, sanctioned by Jesus, and declared by Paul

to be inspired, instead of indulging my ingenuity in finding out an evil tendency in it, I set myself to discover its wisdom, and reap the instruction and comfort it is calculated to afford. In this view, I am persuaded, every humble Christian will find it a part of the treasures of infinite wisdom. The spirit that rejects it is a spirit of infidelity; and though this writer indulges it only in denying a few of the books of inspiration, it is the very same spirit that works in the complete infidel, in denying the whole word of God. To deny the whole volume of inspiration, would not require the adoption of any additional principle; it would only be necessary to act more fully up to it.

If there is any thing in the books of Chronicles, the wisdom of which, humility, patience, and labour cannot discover, I am convinced that there is more good sense, as well as piety, in the observation of Mr Scot, than in the fastidiousness of this writer: "If we could not understand, or get any 'benefit from certain portions of the Scriptures, it 'would be more reasonable," says that pious man, "to blame our own dulness, than, so much as in 'thought, to censure them as useless." This is a sentiment that breathes the true spirit of Christianity.

Instead of finding cause of quarrel with the book of Esther, it is a part of Scripture that I have long admired as super-eminently abounding with proofs of a divine origin. I see in it the characteristic features of the divine wisdom, and every where discover traces of the finger of God. It is to me a

key to the history of the world, and an inspired commentary on the book of Providence. From this I am taught to see the hand of God in the minutest concerns of my life, as well as in guiding the wheels of empire. When storms and darkness thicken over my head, from the book of Esther I am led to hope that they may break around me in blessings, or at least be dispersed without doing me injury. When this book is commended to me by the canon approved by Jesus, shall I give up to hypercritical fastidiousness, all the consolation which it affords me? He that robs me of my money steals trash; but he that robs me of any part of the word of God, takes from me what all the earth cannot replace. Learned men, in the wantonness of their genius, may think it a very harmless thing to question our title to some parts of the domains left us by our Lord. In the sport of criticism, they may give away tracts of Scripture territory with much less concern than an amateur would the picture assigned to an admired artist, or than a scholar would give up an ode of Horace. But a Christian, acting fully in the spirit of Christianity, will cling to every word of the Holy Book, and guard it as a miser guards his treasures. The Scriptures are the title-deeds of his estate; and he will, with the utmost care, preserve every line and every word from erasure.

The omission complained of in the Book of Esther, is quite analogous to the providence of God which it illustrates. It is in the characteristic style of Divine Wisdom. Divine Providence rules all

the events of this world; but he guides the universe with an unseen hand. Though his friends see his hand in every thing, his enemies see him not at all. In all the operations of his wisdom and power, they perceive nothing but chance and confusion. Fortune is the goddess which they put in the place of the God of Providence. They are like children beholding the movements of puppets. The hand behind the curtain is never suspected. A leaf cannot move on a branch—no living creature can draw breath, without the operation of the divine hand; yet are the most wonderful interpositions of his providence unnoticed by the wisdom of this world. God is hidden from the eyes of men, even while he is every where at work before their face. Is there any need for a voice from heaven to proclaim, on every occasion, "It is God that performs this?" Is it not self-evident to every creature truly wise? Are not all inexcusable who do not acknowledge his over-ruling power? Must a herald proclaim him the author of his works, before men are blameable in ascribing them to another cause? Is he so bad a painter that the style of his works is not characteristic of their author? Is he so little known in the world, that witnesses must be brought into court to prove his hand-writing? If there is a human creature, possessed of all the faculties of man, who is unacquainted with the hand-writing of God, he is a guilty creature. Innumerable examples of it have, from his infancy, been before his eyes. And why should not the Book of Esther be in the style of the hand-writing of that Providence,

whose wonders it exhibits? Both are anonymous letters; but they are letters which heaven and earth could not counterfeit. The hand-writing proves its author. To ascribe the Book of Esther to a wicked Jew, is as void of foundation, as to ascribe the works of Providence to the devil.

Had we written the book of Esther, no doubt our wisdom would have expressed our whole creed, guarded at all points by logical definition, to cut off pretence for evasion. The feeblest pin would have afforded a hold for all the weight of our orthodoxy. But it is not so with the wisdom of God. The truth, in all its bearings, is not exhibited in any single passage in the Bible. To have a complete view of it, we must bring together passages scattered throughout the whole Scriptures. The Book of Esther is designed for a particular purpose; it is sufficient that it serves that purpose. As a part of the sacred volume, it is admirably instructive; it never was designed to stand alone. The preaching of Jesus himself could not stand the test to which this writer subjects the Book of Esther. He did not, in every address, bring forward the doctrine of salvation. The book of Esther teaches the truth as far as it goes; it is no degradation to it that it leaves the most important thing to be gathered by inference. Even by itself, its meaning cannot be innocently mistaken; but, in conjunction with the other books of Scripture, all appearance of cover is removed. Is it not sufficient if the whole Scriptures contain the whole will of God? Shall we arrogantly prescribe to him what

is requisite in every part? While the way of salvation is dispersed in multitudes of places through the Bible, many passages might be collected in which there is nothing about it.

I implore such writers to reflect on the awful nature of their sentiments. If this book is inspired, and, if Dr Smith's explanation of 2 Timothy iii. 16 be correct, inspired it must be, how highly audacious is it to ascribe it to some wicked Jew! If, in their judgment, it contains evidence of being the work of a wicked author, do they not find that wickedness in God, should the book be finally acknowledged by God? Is there hazard here? Is not rashness on such a point the extravagance of madness? If the work is charged as a wicked work, and God is found to be its author, is not God charged with its wickedness? I admit that the writer does not intentionally make such a charge. But does this clear him? If so, the Jews will be innocent in rejecting the gospel; for they conceive that it led to licentiousness. If so, the modern revilers of salvation, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, will all stand without blame; for they oppose it out of zeal for the interests of good works. Has the man of sin opposed the truth, as being the doctrine of Christ, and the true gospel? Does he not view the gospel of the grace of God as the heresy of wicked men, seduced by the devil? Yet he is the son of perdition, the smoke of whose torment ascendeth for ever and ever. And is it a light thing upon the strength of rash objections, to affront the Spirit of truth, and ascribe,

though ignorantly, any part of the word of God to wicked men? If this charge is unfounded, even though not intended as against God, it argues disaffection to the divine wisdom. What is unbelief but disaffection to the wisdom of God? Men reject the gospel, because, indulging their own wisdom, the wisdom of God appears foolishness to them. Instead of submitting to the plan of divine wisdom, when communicated to them, they take on them to question its merits; and finding it altogether opposed to their own views, they reject it as an imposture, or explain it in conformity with the wisdom of man. Had the gospel appeared the wisdom of God, in the estimation of the princes of this world, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. They did this in ignorance,—because the wisdom of God is foolishness to the world; but this ignorance, as it was enmity against the wisdom of God, which nothing but atheistical pride of human wisdom could have kept them from discerning, was culpable in the highest degree. This ignorance was damnation. Now, if the book of Esther is really written in the wisdom of God, it will be no defence for this writer, that it is not in the style of human wisdom. God has presented it to him as his own work, by having it inserted in the canon sanctioned by Christ, and attested as inspired by Paul. If, in the arrogance of his own wisdom, he presumes to see defects in it, notwithstanding such attestation, it is at his peril he rejects it. He indulges the very same spirit that induces all unbelievers to reject the gospel. Do I then say,

that to deny the inspiration of this book is damnation? No—I say it is not damnation; because no ignorance or opposition to the divine wisdom is damnation, but the ignorance of one point—the ignorance of the wisdom of God in the plan of salvation. This ignorance is declared by God to be damnation. But ignorance of every other part of the divine wisdom is not damnation; because it is declared that he that believeth the gospel shall be saved. It could not be a truth to which there is no exception, that the belief of the gospel is salvation, if any ignorance consistent with the knowledge of this one point, was damnation. But while I rejoice in this fact so comforting to us all, for none of us are without our errors and ignorance, I think it right to keep it constantly before my own mind, and that of all my brethren, that every instance of disaffection to the divine wisdom is highly criminal. It is this that has introduced all the corruptions of the gospel; it is this that has changed all the ordinances of God, and introduced into nominal Christianity all the pomp and ceremony of pagan Rome. I am convinced that many in the Church of Rome, with all the ignorance of the divine wisdom that keeps them there, may have so much knowledge of the wisdom of God in the plan of salvation, as will wash them in the blood of Christ, and at last present them blameless before his throne. But while I think so, I do not on that account think their ignorance innocent, nor cease to cry to them in the words of the Lord, "Come out of her, 'my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins,

' and that ye receive not of her plagues." In like manner do I judge of the denial of the inspiration of the book of Esther, on the considerations of its supposed defects. It appears to me exceedingly sinful, without the alleviating circumstances of prejudice, education, &c. that weigh on the Roman Catholic. Were the objection a thousand times more plausible than it is, prudence, I think, should dictate very great caution in condemning. Had the objection struck me as it did the writer of the article, instead of rashly yielding to it, my reason teaches me, that as the book is authenticated by God, I should have sought by reading and prayer, to see the divine wisdom of that which in my wisdom did not appear such. Instead of boldly concluding from first sight, that this was evidence of a wicked author, I would have taken it for granted, that there was wisdom in it, though I could not discern that wisdom. In this way, I have no doubt, I would have come to see the wisdom of that which might at first strike me as folly. As I am man, and not God, I never pretend to judge for God. All his ways, I take it for granted, are wise, and my wisdom is to search for the traces of that wisdom. In sitting down to a human writing, I try every thing with the utmost circumspection and jealousy. In re-perusing my own writings, I do the same, because to err is human. But when I sit down to the Scriptures, it is not with the eye of a critic to find faults, nor as a judge to put them on their trial at the bar of my own wisdom. As I have the fullest evidence that they are the word

of God, I read to learn,—I read to explore the divine wisdom,—I read to discover what may lie hid from human wisdom. As the Scriptures are the word of God, I expect such a fulness and perfection in them, that I may dig up treasures that may have yet escaped the eye of human wisdom. Having found the key of the divine wisdom in the Scriptures, I apply it every where; and the marked characteristics of that wisdom, are to me the best commentary on the book of God, both of Scripture and providence. It is in this way, that the thing that has stumbled this writer, has long appeared to me as a certain evidence of the divine origin of the book of Esther. Whether his scepticism, or my faith, is more suitable to human weakness, I might leave to the determination of every humble Christian. At all events, I triumph in the appeal to the throne of the eternal judge, for the decision of this controversy.

I request the writer's attention to another consequence of the sentiment advanced by him on the subject of the inspiration of the objected books. He lays a foundation for infidelity, with respect to the denial of the inspired books, to any extent that a person may choose to build on it. He is himself displeased only with a few books; but if his principles are admitted, I do not know how any book can be retained. The authority of the canon, with all its sanctions, he does not admit as paramount; and the non-conformity of its matter to his own views, is allowed as sufficient to discredit the title of a book to the character of inspiration. How

then can any book of Scripture stand such an ordeal? A thousand things in the epistles may more plausibly be objected to, than the defect complained of in the book of Esther. So far from the absence of the name God, proving irresistibly that none but a wicked Jew could have written that book, it appears to me, on the contrary, that had a wicked Jew really been the author, it would have possessed the perfection, the want of which the writer so much regrets. How could either the honour, or the safety of the Jewish people, or any single Jew, be hazarded by the avowal, that the governor of the universe was their protector and avenger? But at all events, in whatever way human wisdom would decide on this question, to deny the inspiration of a book so highly sanctioned on the ground of speculations of this kind, appears to me to be the very wantonness of sceptical folly. Such evidence as that on which this writer rests, would not be sufficient to displace from his works any of the orations usually ascribed to Demosthenes. To reject the book of Esther on such evidence, is the very madness of criticism. Admit such principles, and who shall defend the inspiration of Paul against the Arians and Socinians? Who shall be able to defend, in the writings of that Apostle, the inspiration of those deep things of God, that appear as hard sayings to the wisdom of this world? Every man may innocently reject whatever is displeasing to his own mind. In this way our Bible will not contain a single page whose

nspiration will be universally admitted. All will be matter of human opinion.

Nor will the writer be able to keep the exact station which he has now chosen. He will either be obliged to come back to us, or the infidel will force him nearer to himself. Let him not vainly imagine, that by throwing the objected books overboard, he will be able to keep the ship from sinking, and save the rest. When he offers to surrender these books to the deist, if he knows his business, he will not take them from him. He may reply, these books that you give up to me, are authenticated by him you call your Master, and by him you denominate the great Apostle of the Gentiles. You must acknowledge them as yours, or you must surrender at discretion, and give me up all the writings of Paul, and all the authority of Jesus. If the one falls, the other will fall of course. Who can depend on Jesus, if he has acknowledged the authority of a book, which you and I have found to be the writing of a wicked Jew? What credit can be given to Paul, if he has so egregiously erred about these books?

What an unholy cause are these writers engaged in! They are labouring as fervently in lowering the character of the word of God, as the Neologians are labouring to sap the foundations of christianity, under a mask of submission to its authority. Dr Smith struggles hard to degrade the inspiration of the Scriptures; and both he and the Ecclectic Review have laboured to unsettle the canon. Both have adopted principles which tend to confusion; and to the sub-

version of the Scriptures as the BOOK OF GOD. Dr Smith has denied the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and every kind of inspiration to all the passages that any one may choose to consider as not being of a religious or moral nature; and the Eclectic Review has rejected whole books of Scripture, on principles that will condemn every book in the canon. Better, much better for a christian, that he had not so much learning as to write his own name, than to display the abilities of Newton, in degrading the word of God. Grotius is said to have exclaimed on his death-bed: *Heu vitam prædidi officiose nihil agendo: Alas! I have spent my life in laboriously doing nothing.* But many learned Christians not only waste their time in laborious triffles, but in ignorantly fighting against God. How much confusion has been brought on divine truth, by the waywardness even of the disciples of the Lord! How much obscurity has been introduced into the plainest subjects, by perverted ingenuity! How much error arises from not reading the Scriptures with the disposition of little children! When will Christians learn to renounce their own wisdom! When will they cease to conform the Scriptures to their own views! When will learned Christians seek the approbation of God in all their labours, regardless of the smiles and of the frowns of a world that lieth in the wicked one! When will truth be esteemed the most precious of all possessions! "Thy testimonies 'have I taken as an heritage for ever;" says the Psalmist, "for they are the rejoicing of my heart."

APPENDIX

TO

REMARKS

ON

DR PYE SMITH'S THEORY OF INSPIRATION.

Dr Pye Smith, in a second edition of his work on the Messiah, has endeavoured, from the import of the word λογος, to silence some of the testimonies for verbal inspiration. "Much stress," says he, "has been laid on the use of the expressions men-'tioned before, (p. 45.) where *speaking*, *saying*, 'and the like, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit *by* 'the *mouth* of his servants; and such passages as 'these, 'I will put my *words* in his mouth.' Deut. 'xviii. 18. 'I have given unto them the *words* '' which thou gavest me,' John xvii. 8. 'We '' speak, not in the *words* which man's wisdom '' teacheth, but in those which the Holy Spirit '' teacheth,' 1 Cor. ii. 13. Those who use this 'argument are probably not acquainted with the 'Scriptural meanings of דבר and λογος, especially 'the plural forms, and the idioms connected with 'them; that they denote, not *vocables*, or *single*

'*words*, but *combined speech*, the *matter* conveyed
'in the *tenor* and *total* of an oral or written address,
'*sermones, la parole.*" vol. 1. p. 97. The peculiarity here adverted to, as far as it is well founded, can be news to no classical scholar. And it is equally obvious to the smallest degree of critical discernment, that this fact cannot bear the inference which Dr Smith draws from it. Even admitting that דבר and λογος never did refer to single terms, the conclusion is not warranted. If *sentences, expressions*, or *combined speech*, are ascribed to God, the single words must be his also, for it is of these the combination is composed. The whole cannot be God's, if the parts separately are not his. Dr Smith's criticism is as absurd, as if one should say, that when an officer is said to be the colonel of such a regiment, it does not import that he is the colonel of the soldiers in that regiment, because the word regiment denotes a body of men united. An oration of Demosthenes is called λογος. But if an oration as a whole is his, the words considered separately, are his also. We do not argue that it signifies single terms as distinguished from terms combined in speech; but that signifying terms combined in speech, it includes single terms. If God is the author of the terms as a combination, he is the author of them considered singly. What we contend for is, that λογος, whether referring to one word, or to a number in combination, refers to *expression*, and that in this respect it is as definite as ρημα itself. λογος when used distinctively, implies expression with respect to a number of words com-

bined; ῥημα, expression with respect to one word. But though λογος has this distinctive meaning, it is not fact that either it or the Hebrew word דבר, is never used with respect to single words. Many examples might be produced to prove the contrary. Joshua viii. 34, 35, " And afterwards he read *all* ' *the words* of the law, the blessings and cursings, ' according to all that is written in the book of the ' law. There was not *a word* of all that Moses ' commanded, which Joshua read not before all the ' congregation of Israel."

Here the term *word* must signify a single word, yet the Hebrew is דבר, for which the Septuagint uses ῥημα.

Isaiah xxxvi. 21. " But they held their peace, ' and answered him not a word." Here the term *word* applies to a single word, yet the Hebrew has דבר, and the Greek λογος.

Psalm cxxxix. 4. " For there is not a *word* in ' my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it alto- ' gether." Here the Hebrew uses מלה, and the Greek λογος.

Isaiah xxix. 21. " That make a man an offender ' for *a word*." Here there can be no doubt, that a single word is meant, yet we have in the Hebrew and in the Greek, the terms in question.

Rev. xxii. 22. " If any man shall take away from ' *the words* of the book of this prophecy." Here the original has λογος, yet it must refer to single terms.

But in this criticism, Dr Smith artfully substitutes the words, " The *matter* conveyed," &c. as synonymous with the words " *combined speech*."

Now the matter conveyed in a speech is not the speech that conveys that matter. The speech contains both the words and the matter, but not the matter without the words, nor distinguished from the words. Though, therefore, λογος signifies *combined speech*, a *sentence, an oration, a treatise*, &c. yet it never signifies the matter of that sentence, oration, treatise, &c. without the words, or distinct from the words. It includes the matter, because the words express the matter. It is admitted, that both the Hebrew word and the Greek have an acceptation, without any reference to expression; but in that acceptation it is evident, they cannot be used in the passages in question. In such instances, they do not denote the meaning or *matter* of a speech, more than the words of a speech. They do not, indeed, refer to speech in any point of view. Let us now take a look at the examples which he alleges as the support of this criticism. "Of this they might discover evidence, if they would examine, in the Hebrew and Greek texts, the following passages, which are but a specimen of a very numerous body. Exod. xviii. 16, 19, 22, 26; xix. 6—9; 2 Sam. xi. 18; Ps. cv. 27; Jer. i. 1; Amos i. 1; 1 Chron. xxix. 29; Mark i. 45; John iv. 37, 39; Acts i. 1; xv. 32; xx. 7; 1 Cor. i. 17, 18; ii. 1, 4; xv. 2," &c. &c." Let us examine them as they stand, and we shall see that they give no testimony that will yield any support to Dr Smith's criticism. Exod. xviii. 16, 19, 22, 26. "When they have a *matter* 'they come unto me,"—"bring the *causes* unto 'God,"—"every *great matter* they shall bring unto

'thee,"—" the hard causes they brought unto 'Moses." Here the Hebrew word דבר is used to denote *matter, thing, cause.* But this does not conform to either part of the definition of the word given by Dr Smith. This is not *combined speech,* nor is it " the *matter* conveyed in the *tenor* and ' *total* of an oral or written address." It is *matter, thing, cause,* without respect to speech. It is only a play upon the sound of the word *matter.* It makes *matter* as an abstract word, coincide with *matter,* as importing meaning, which are as different in their significations as any two words in the language. And it is most strange that Dr Smith has not observed, that in this acceptation of the Hebrew term, the Septuagint has used ρημα, as well as λογος, as a translation. In verse 16, the Greek is αντιλογια, *a controversy;* in verse 19, the Greek is λογος; and in verse 22, 26, ρημα is used. Indeed ρημα is the term used for *thing,* in Luke ii. 15. In this acceptation then, ρημα and λογος are equally used. In the sense of *combined speech,* both ρημα and επος, are used as well as λογος, though when used distinctively, each has its peculiar province. λογος has a greater variety of significations than any of its synonyms. There is no doubt, but there is a connection between the remotest of these and the original idea; and it is the business of the philosophical linguist to trace this connection. But the fact is all we are concerned with, that it has the meaning of *matter, cause, thing, office,* as well as the corresponding Hebrew term, without any reference to speech at all. In this, however, ρημα

has suffered the same extension. Indeed, the origin of this use is not difficult to discover. What can be more obvious, than a metonymy of the expression for the thing expressed, and in progress, the passing of the metonymical use into proper signification, without any reference to expression? Why, I ask, has Dr Smith grounded an argument upon this use of λογος, which might as well be grounded on ρημα, the very term which distinctly denotes words as single terms? Might not another as reasonably say, "ρημα signifies *matter*, '*thing*, &c. therefore it cannot be understood of 'single words." This definition, then, is inconsistent with itself, and the examples are inconsistent with both parts of it.

In Exodus xix. 6. 9, the Hebrew word is used in its usual meaning as denoting words, and is rendered by the Septuagint both by λογος and ρημα. Moses laid before the people the very words of the Lord, and to denote these words the LXX use the two Greek words indifferently.

2 Sam. xi. 18. "Then Joab sent and told 'David, all *the things* concerning the war." Here the term in the original corresponding to *things*, may either be taken as signifying *things*, without any reference to words, or the *words of the war*, may be *words* giving an account of the war—*words* in the strict sense.

Psalm cv. 27. They shewed *the words* of his signs, that is, they used the words which God put into their mouth, by which the signs were perform-

ed. But in whatever way this phraseology is explained, it can have no bearing on the dispute.

Jer. i. 1. "The words of Jeremiah," &c. And what else are they than words? These words contained the things that he spoke. The LXX translate it, "The word of God that came upon 'Jeremiah," &c. using the word ῥημα, and in the next verse using λογος for the same thing.

Amos i. 1. "The words of Amos." And the words of Amos they are, notwithstanding it is said that he *saw* them. This phraseology is to be understood on the same principle as that which speaks of seeing a voice. There was a vision; something was seen, which uttered things that were heard. Would it be more intelligible to substitute for the "words of Amos," *the combined speeches* of Amos, or "the *matter* conveyed in the tenor and total of 'the oral or written address, sermones, la parole of 'Amos?" I think it would need as good glasses to see all this, as to see the words of the prophet.

Mark i. 45. "Blaze abroad the matter." Though the passage might be translated *the report*, that is, the report of the miracle, yet I have no objection to the common version, which is quite in accordance with what I have already advanced. But it is *matter*, or *thing*, without reference to words. It is not meaning contra-distinguished from words. It is not *matter* conveyed in the tenor and total of a written or oral address.

John iv. 37, 39. "And herein is that saying 'true,"—"The saying of the woman." Very good proof, if Dr Smith had the misfortune to con-

tend with any so uninformed as to assert that λογος always signifies a single term, and not a number of terms in combination. He does not, however, find in us critics of this stamp. λογος we contend may signify one word, or a whole treatise. Is it of such a thing as this that Dr Smith presumes to say, that those who alleged an argument from the phraseology which he quotes, are probably unacquainted? Who is unacquainted with the fact that λογος has a multiplicity of meanings? None who are able to look for a word in a lexicon. But because the term λογος signifies a sentence, or saying, or report, &c. &c. cannot it signify words? Then the term *word* itself in English, could not signify *word*, for it is used for *saying*, or report, as well as λογος. Never was criticism more childish, with all its parade of Hebrew and Greek.

Acts i. 1. "*The former treatise account*," *&c.* No man worth replying to, ever doubted such acceptations of the term λογος. But does not the term in this acceptation apply to every word in the treatise? If it was Luke's treatise, the words were the words of Luke; a treatise comprehends both words and matter. Strange indeed, if this should be opposed to the idea of verbal inspiration!

Acts xv. 32. "Exhorted the brethren with '*many words*, or much discourse." Did they exhort without words? The fact that λογος denotes combined speech, does not imply that words are

not included in it. If not, this has no bearing on the subject.

Acts xx. 7. "Continued his discourse." Why waste time with such allegations as this? I suppose his discourse consisted in words, and though the term λογος applies to the whole, all the parts are necessarily included in the whole.

1 Cor. i. 17. "Not with wisdom of words," or as in the margin, "of speech." Is it not the expression here that is directly referred to? 1 Cor. i. 18. "The preaching of the cross." This might be alleged to shew, that the term λογος, had other meanings, as well as that in which it denotes words, a thing that no man ever thought of calling in question. But does this say, that the term, when it signifies words, either singly or combined, cannot refer to expression?

In 1 Cor. ii. 1—4. λογος does not indeed denote a single word, but speech. But this is nothing to the purpose of Dr Smith. Speech is made up of single words, and the words of a speech are the words of the author of the speech. It would be absurd to say, that a speech was inspired, but that the words were not inspired. Is it not of expression, as distinguished from the thing expressed, that the apostle is here speaking?

In 1 Cor. xv. 2. The word is variously explained, but in no sense can it favour Dr Smith. Our translation is substantially good, though it overlooks something expressed in the original, which, indeed, can hardly be exactly given in an English version. τινι λογω in this place would, I think, be exactly

rendered by *qua ratione*, referring both to the doctrine preached, and the orderly connection and dependence of the parts of that doctrine. That both the ideas are included, is evident from the illustration which the Apostle himself gives of the expression, in the following verses. He states the different parts of his doctrine, and the order in which they are taught. "If ye remember *how* I preach-'ed the gospel to you," might not be far from expressing the ideas of the original. But how can this passage, in any sense of which it is capable, tend to prove that λογος, when applied to the Scriptures, cannot mean the expression as distinguished from the meaning? Is there any word perfectly univocal? Did any one ever suppose, that λογος had not a vast variety of meanings? Does Dr Smith mean to assert, that the meaning which it has here, it must have in these passages which are the subjects of dispute? He refers us to a number of examples in which he supposes we will find some wonderful discovery, of which till the time of his writing, we were not at all aware. That discovery, however, is known to any school-boy, as soon as he is able to trace the words of his lexicon. And worst of all, it has nothing to do with the subject. But I invite the reader especially to attend to the manner in which Dr Smith endeavours to neutralize the testimony of 1 Cor. ii. 13. This passage is so clear, that he is obliged to confess that it refers to expression, but by resolving expression into *expressions, style, manner*, he contrives to turn the reader's attention to the latter as

the only thing meant in the Apostle's assertion. " The passage 1 Cor. ii. 13," says he, " evidently ' refers to the expressions, style, and manner in which ' the Apostle taught the truths of the gospel; and it ' declares that he did not use splendid eloquence and ' oratorical arts, nor resort to any other kind of al- ' lurement to captivate hearers. (εν λογω Κολακειας, ' 1 Thess. ii. 5.—πλαστοις λογοις, 2 Pet. ii. 3;) but that ' he delivered his heavenly message in simplicity of ' diction, as taught and inspired by the Holy Spirit, ' (Πνευματικοις Πνευματικα συγκρινοντες adapting spiri- ' ritual (expressions) to spiritual subjects." Now, what can be fairer in appearance than this, if it is read without a critical eye? What can we demand more than is here admitted? And is not style the principle thing to which the Apostle refers? But there is management here that perverts the testimony of God. The art by which the writer quashes the evidence here is, by substituting something implied in what is said, for the thing that is actually said. It is of expression solely that the Apostle speaks. Style, manner, &c. are undoubtedly implied in this, but they are not the thing of which the assertion is made. Splendid eloquence and oratorical arts are unquestionably included in the denial, but they are not the thing of which the denial is made. They are included because *expression* includes them; but it is of expression that the assertion is made. The apostle's words do not directly declare that he did not use splendid eloquence and oratorical arts. But this is one of the things implied in the declaration. The thing declared is,

that the apostle expressed divine truth, *not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Holy Spirit.* The assertion then is made of the expression or words directly, and respects style only as it is included in expression. The thing that he denies is not the using of flattery and simulation, according to 1 Thess. ii. 5., 2 Pet. ii. 3., but that *he spoke the truths of the Gospel in words taught by the wisdom of man.* That he did not use flattery and simulation is no doubt implied in this. What he asserts, is not " that he delivered ' his heavenly message in simplicity of diction," though this is implied in what he does assert; but that he *delivered his heavenly message in heavenly words.* The author then has uncorked the heavenly liquor, and presents it to us in a state quite evaporated and vapid. He has besides put an infusion into it calculated to deceive the eye and the taste. Here is a passage then, Dr Smith, that your instruments of torture cannot silence, nor force to prevaricate. It speaks of *words,* and whether these be considered as single terms, or expression as combined speech, it is *expression* directly distinguished from *meaning.* The Holy Ghost most plainly declares, that *the truths of the Gospel* were taught by the apostles *in his own words.* He speaks both of the matter and of the expression in this passage, and directly ascribes to the Holy Spirit the latter as distinguished from the former. No words could more expressly assert verbal inspiration. It is as clear that the words are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as that the things are ascribed to

him. Dr Smith, it is no easy thing to fight against the word of God. When you may think that you have stoned it to death, it will with Paul quickly stand upon its feet and testify against you as loudly as ever. You have done your utmost to murder this passage, but it rises up in judgment against you, and proclaims that the apostles *spoke the things of the Spirit in the words of the Spirit.* "WHICH 'THINGS ALSO WE SPEAK, NOT IN THE WORDS 'WHICH MAN'S WISDOM TEACHETH, BUT WHICH 'THE HOLY GHOST TEACHETH.' Can you look to the judgment seat of Christ, and deny that this asserts verbal inspiration? If you can, I do not envy you your conscience or your perspicacity.

With respect to the words Πνευματικοῖς Πνευματικα συγκρινοντες I am well enough pleased with the common version, in this instance, as in most others. But whatever is right, right Dr Smith's version cannot be, "adapting spiritual (expressions) 'to spiritual subjects." 1. When an adjective is thus exhibited without its substantive, the substantive must be of the most general nature, and so obvious as to occasion no question as to what it is. *Things*, and neither *expressions* nor subjects, is the proper substantive. 2. It is necessary that the same substantive should be supplied to both words. *Expressions* cannot be supplied to the one, and subjects to the other. Let Dr Smith produce me an undoubted instance of similar syntax, and I will withdraw this objection. 3. Were such syntax allowable, I would translate the passage thus:— *Explaining or interpreting the things of the Spi-*

rit, in the words of the Spirit, a meaning both true and suited to the connection. But as I am convinced that such syntax is not warrantable, I will never attempt to force the word of God to support my views. I will not put one finger on the ark, though it should appear to be falling over a precipice. If God's word cannot support its own truths, let error prevail to the day of judgment. I stand quite at ease in defending my sentiments on all subjects of divine truth. I consider it my duty to establish them, and to convince others, by an exhibition of evidence as clear as I am able. But I will not *forge proof*, were I assured of proselyting the world. It is not to please myself, that I adopt my views, and I cannot expect to please God by defending his truth with falsehood. 4. With respect to the word συγκρινοντες, we might as well open an English book at random, and take any word that should first occur, as a translation, as take the word *adapting*. This is to make Scripture not to translate. Will Dr Smith be so good as to shew us where this word occurs in this acceptation? 5. Were there no other objection, the phrase *spiritual expressions* appears to be unwarrantable. What is a *spiritual expression*, as distinguished from the *things expressed?* Are there any expressions either as to words or phrases, of a spiritual nature abstracted from their meaning, or contra-distinguished from it? Is there any spiritual vocabulary, in any language? Did not the Apostles take the common words of the languages in which they spoke, and apply them

to express divine truth? If some fanatic had spoken about *spiritual expressions*, I would have known that he referred to the cant phrases of his party, but when I meet it in the writings of Dr Pye Smith, I cannot understand it.

Upon the whole then, this criticism of Dr Smith, is liable to the following objections. 1. It confounds two meanings of the word λογος, that are entirely distinct—namely, *combined speech*, and *matter, thing, cause, affair*. The examples in which it has the former meaning, refer to expression, as much as when it denotes single words; and in the latter signification, it has no reference to speech at all, either in expression or meaning. 2. it supposes that λογος when it refers to speech, always signifies combined speech, and never words, which is not fact. It may signify a treatise, but it may also signify a single word. 3. It plays on the sound of the word *matter*, and because it signifies the abstract idea *matter*, it is made to signify *matter*, as the meaning of words, two ideas as different as any two that can be conceived. The definition of the words דבר and λογος, uses the word *matter*, as signifying the meaning of an expression, the examples in which the words signify *matter*, all refer to *matter* in the abstract sense. The examples of course fail in proving that for which they are alleged. 4. Had it even been successful as to the words דבר and λογος, this would not have affected the evidence arising from the phraseology, in which "*speaking*, *saying*, and the like, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, by *the mouth* of his

' servants." Yet the criticism professes to apply to this. 5. The criticism supposes that the signification of *combined speech*, is peculiar to the Hebrew and the Greek, whereas it is just as fully verified in English, as in either. The English term *word*, denotes a promise, a saying, a report, an account, short statement, or even the whole Scriptures. We say, *a man pledges his word, for he gives his promise, the word went abroad, for the report spread*—I will ask you *one word*, for one *question*—*In a word*, for *in short*—the *word of God*, for *the Bible*, *&c.* Dr Smith's criticism then, is just as if a foreigner finding our term *word* as signifying, a *saying*, *report*, *&c.* should venture to assert that it never signified single terms, but denotes combined speech, the matter conveyed in the *tenor* and *total* of an oral or written address. Any school boy speaking the English language would laugh at such a criticism. Yet, in dead languages, it passes for the most profound erudition. 6. Lastly, I object to this criticism, because the author does not shew the bearing of the examples on the point at issue. Had he done so, he must have left himself more open to assault, or have discovered his error. But by a mere general reference to passages, he commits himself as little as possible; and most readers will be more inclined to take the argument on trust, than have the labour of scrutinizing the proof. By this means also, he may puzzle many whom he cannot satisfy.

But it is an unhallowed task Dr Smith has

undertaken. It is a wretched thing to toil in endeavouring to shew how little the Scriptures deserve to be called the word of God. His first attempt has miserably failed; and if it is only in this feeble way he intends to sustain our charge, it is a virtual confession of defeat.

STRICTURES

ON

DR DICK'S ESSAY ON THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

I AM surprised to find in Dr Dick's Essay on the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, a recognition of the mischievous distinctions which have laid a foundation for so much error and confusion on this plain subject. The author is not chargeable to the same extent with any of those whose works I have been reviewing; nor is it his design in any measure to lower the Scriptures in accommodation to Neological illumination. On the contrary, he rather adopts than vindicates the distinctions; and his admissions unfavourable to full verbal inspiration, are rather concessions that he cannot refuse, than assertions which it gives him pleasure to substantiate. Of course, though I acquit him of treason, I cannot clear him of incompetency. I must arraign him as having surrendered a fortress which he might have held, had he made the best advantages

of the munitions of war, with which the royal arsenals were abundantly supplied.

In some respects his work is more dangerous to the unsuspecting Christian, than the worst of the kind; for while he substantially gives up proper inspiration with respect to many things both as to matter and words, he speaks decidedly and strongly in reprehension of partial inspiration. The reader is led to think that no higher inspiration can be thought of, than that vindicated by the author.

On the nature and designations of the distinctions in inspiration, he quarrels with the common views; but as long as he adopts them substantially, he is involved in the same error. He divides the kinds or degrees of inspiration into three classes. "1. 'There are many things in the Scriptures, which 'the writers might have known, and probably did 'know, by ordinary means." "2. There are other 'passages of Scripture, in composing which, the 'minds of the writers must have been supernaturally 'endowed with more than ordinary vigour." "3. 'It is manifest, with respect to many passages of 'Scripture, that the subjects of which they treat, 'must have been directly revealed to the writers." Let us attend to these in order. With respect to the first, he says, "As persons possessed of memo-'ry, judgment, and the other intellectual faculties 'which are common to men, they were able to re-'late events in which they had been concerned; 'and to make such occasional reflections as were 'suggested by particular subjects and occurrences." Now this is very true, but would such relations be

entitled to be called the word of God? Could it be said, that they were given by inspiration of God? Such relations might be true, but they are not inspired. "In these cases," says the author, "no 'supernatural influence was necessary to enlighten 'and invigorate their minds; it was only necessary 'that they should be infallibly preserved from 'error." Necessary for what? If it be necessary to produce a true narrative, this is just. But if the assertion is, that this is all that is necessary to entitle the narrative to be called the word of God, the thing must be strongly denied. A narrative that has nothing more than this cannot be said to be "written by inspiration." "They did not need 'a revelation," says he, "to inform them of what 'had passed before their eyes, nor to point out 'those inferences and moral maxims, which were 'obvious to every attentive and considerate ob-'server." Very true, they did not indeed need any information with respect to what they knew. But in recording what they saw before their eyes, they must relate that only which is given them by the Holy Ghost, in the very words of the Holy Ghost, if their narrative is to be the word of God, and be characterized as given by inspiration. "Moses 'could tell," says he, "without a divine afflatus, 'that on such a night the Israelites marched out 'of Egypt, and at such a place they murmured 'before God; and Solomon could remark, that "a 'soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous 'words stir up anger," &c. No doubt of it; but if such facts in the narrative of Moses, have been told

without a divine afflatus, they are not a part of the Scriptures; and if Solomon had nothing but his own spirit in recording these moral maxims, they may be true, but are not entitled to be received as dictates of inspiration. Inspiration is not necessary to constitute true information, but surely inspiration is necessary for every thing that is said to be inspired. Can a thing be inspired without inspiration? The author indeed afterwards asserts that such things require more than superintendence. "In the passages of Scripture," says he, "which we are now considering, 'I conceive the writers to have been not merely 'superintended, that they might commit no error, 'but likewise to have been moved or excited by 'the Holy Ghost to record particular events, and 'set down particular observations." So far this is in the right path: but it does not go far enough. The Holy Ghost not only pointed out the particular events and observations, but if the account can be called inspired, the whole matter and language must be God's. The writers of Scripture were not like amanuenses, as this author represents them, copying such things as have been selected for them by their employer, but writing as he dictated. There is indeed something in the case that cannot be represented by an amanuensis. The sacred writers are rational instruments, through the operations of whose minds, God communicates his will. That the Almighty is able to speak his mind in this way, so that the same thing will be the writing of men

and the word of God, is quite possible. The mode in which it is done, it is not for us to inquire.

Let us now glance at the second distinction, which is the invigorating of the memory and judgment. This is quite foreign to the question of the inspiration of the Scriptures. That some things in Scripture are not beyond the reach of the most ordinary talents; and that others could not have been produced by the highest order of created intellect, is very true. It is admitted also, that passages of the former class do not contain the evidence of their own inspiration; and that the inspiration of the latter is self-evident. Dr Dick produces many passages that most clearly prove their inspiration by their sublimity; but that there are innumerable passages that do not prove their divine origin by any intrinsic elevation, no one will dispute. In such a view the distinction is good. But if it can be said of the passages of the latter class, that they are all given by inspiration of God, they must as truly be the work of God as the former. An uninspired man might have written the account of Ananias and Sapphira; but if it is Scripture, it is as much the work of God, as the description of the horse in the book of Job. It does not follow, that man, without inspiration, wrote every thing in the Scriptures, which might have been written without inspiration. Some things in Milton might have been written by an ordinary poet, but the meanest things in Paradise Lost are as much the work of Milton, as the most sublime flights of genius. As a matter of fact then, though a man's writings may display more or less

ability, they cannot be more or less his; and if all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, no Scripture can be more or less inspired than another, though different parts may contain in themselves more or less evidence of inspiration. It may be said that God has discovered himself in some passages, and in others he has not discovered himself. But if all Scripture is given by inspiration, no passage can be more or less inspired. A writer cannot be more or less the author of any part of a work, of every part of which he is said to be the author. If every part of Scripture which might have been written without inspiration, was actually written without inspiration, then such parts cannot be said to be inspired. On the other hand, if such parts were written by inspiration, they are on a level with every other part, as to inspiration. That this invigoration of mind is no kind or degree of the inspiration of Scripture, is farther evident from the consideration, that the highest measures of it might have been given to the sacred writers, while not a sentence of their writing might have been inspired. To inspire a man with vigour of intellect, is quite a different thing from inspiring him with a communication. Now, it is not the writers of Scriptures who are said to be inspired, but their writings are said to be inspired. "All Scripture is given by inspira-
' tion." A writer might indeed be inspired to write one thing, and he might write another without inspiration. But this supposition is excluded as to the Scriptures, since the inspiration is asserted, not of the writers, but of the writings. A writer might

be inspired with genius and vigour, while every sentence written by him might be altogether uninspired. A mere simpleton might become a Milton, or even might obtain such vigour as to enable him to equal the sublimity of the book of Job; while not a sentence written by him could be called the word of God, or said to be given by inspiration of God. The invigorating of the minds of the writers of Scripture, therefore, is no kind or degree of the inspiration of Scripture. Whatever parts of the Scripture, therefore, are the production of men supernaturally invigorated, are not the word of God, are not inspired in any sense. Were God to enable a child to write a poem superior to the Iliad, would that poem be the book of God? Could it be said to be written by the inspiration of God? God had indeed qualified the child to write the book, but the book was still the production of the child, and could in no sense be called God's, any more than it could be said that God built the city of Glasgow. God has given to all men the talents which they possess. This, however, does not entitle their writings to be called his. And the case is quite the same in this respect, whether the talents be natural, or an extraordinary gift.

With respect to the third distinction, it is true that while some things were fully known to the writers, other things could not be known but by immediate revelation. But this is not the question. The question is, whether things that could be known by natural means, were written without inspiration, or written by an inspiration different in kind from

that which records the things known only by revelation, or inferior in degree to it. It required no inspiration to teach a man what he knew; but it required inspiration to write such an account of this as could be called the word of God, or be said to be written by inspiration. Any spectator at the tomb of Lazarus, was fit to say "Jesus wept;" but if it can be said that this is Scripture, and if it is true, that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of 'God;" it required as much inspiration to write, "Jesus wept," as to record what was said of the things, "which eyes had not seen, and ear had not 'heard." An uninspired man might have said "Jesus wept!" But if the Evangelist said it without inspiration, it is not Scripture. As it is Scripture, and as all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, we are entitled to say that the Holy Ghost has said "Jesus wept," as well as to say, that the Holy Ghost has said, "Unto us a child is 'born," &c. There is no more inspiration in the one account than there is in the other. The great mistake on this subject has arisen from considering inspiration as it respects the inspired person; whereas the inspiration asserted 2 Tim. iii. 16, respects the things written. Now, if every part of a writing be given by inspiration, no part of it can be uninspired, or differently inspired. In the relation of the most ordinary fact, God must have given every word of the account, else it cannot be said to be given by his inspiration. Every part of it is the word of God, and the inspiration that records the deepest mysteries cannot go beyond this. Inspira-

tion, as it respects the inspired persons, might have many degrees. Two might be inspired with the knowledge of some things equally, while one of them might be inspired with the knowledge of many things unrevealed to the other. But the question is not, whether one man may not have been more inspired than another, but whether one part of Scripture is more inspired than another. The question is independent even of the truth or falsehood of the thing recorded by inspiration. The inspiration of the account of Satan's lie in deceiving our first parents, is as great as that which records the promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent."

It has arisen entirely from viewing inspiration as it respects the inspired persons, and not the things written by them, that it has appeared absurd to speak of inspiration with respect to what was known by natural means, and that could have been written without inspiration, or without revelation. To avoid this absurdity, some have denied inspiration with respect to some things, while others, with more reverence for the Scriptures, contrived such distinctions in the word, as to suit the various cases. But this difficulty does not at all present itself when the question is properly stated. It is not said that the sacred writers were inspired with knowledge which they previously possessed. But it is said their accounts of every thing recorded by them are given by inspiration; and this is as true with respect to things previously known by them, as it is with respect to things communicated by revelation.

When they wrote what they knew, and could of themselves have expressed, both the matter and the words were God's, as much as when they wrote what they did not understand. There was no need to be inspired with the knowledge of what they knew, but every word in their account of this, may be by inspiration.

The author himself reasons in this way, when dealing with those who maintain partial inspiration. "The notion of a partial inspiration," says he, in a note, "seems to have arisen from the 'want of distinct ideas on the subject. A false meaning 'is annexed to the term; and then it is easy to 'shew that it cannot be applied to every part of 'Scripture. Inspiration is supposed to signify the 'supernatural communication of knowledge to the 'mind; and if this were the only sense of the 'word, it would be true, that inspiration was not 'necessary to enable men to relate what they 'knew by ordinary means." So far the observation is just. But in what follows, the writer labours under a mistake, as great as that which he censures. "But if," says he, "we understand by 'inspiration, the general assistance afforded to the 'sacred writers according to the exigency of the 'case, and which supplied the want of knowledge, 'or rendered it correct, or excited the person to 'communicate it, and presided over his thoughts 'and expressions, it may be affirmed, that simple 'historians were inspired as well as prophets," &c. *If we understand by inspiration the general assistance, &c.!* That is, if we understand inspiration

to mean what it does not mean, which in no instance it can be shewn to mean, and which it cannot mean; if we suppose inspiration to mean any thing we choose to take out of it, then the case will have no difficulty. A general assistance is not inspiration. Did it not occur to the writer, that if inspiration is a general assertion of the Holy Spirit, according to exigency, then it might be alleged by Socinians, that there is not in Scripture any need of that inspiration which he terms revelation. If the word, to serve *his* purpose, may be taken at so small an amount, what will oblige others, on any occasion, to take it at a higher value? The just way to answer those who labour under the above mistake, is not to lower the meaning of the word, but to shew that inspiration is asserted of every part of the Scriptures; and not that the sacred writers were inspired to know what they previously knew. When an amanuensis writes an account of a death for a newspaper, he may write by dictation, as well as when he records a new theory. In like manner, when the sacred writers wrote an account of things with which they were fully acquainted, they wrote what the Spirit dictated, and in the words of the Spirit.

Here then, I distinctly charge Dr Dick with surrendering a post to the enemy, that will enable him to make himself master of the field. This concession virtually gives up inspiration. A general assistance according to exigency, is not inspiration. I call on Dr Dick to shew what part of the instructions of his royal Master warrants him to

explain inspiration in so lax a sense. Is it optional with us to attach any meaning that suits us, to the words of Scripture? If a general assistance according to exigency is inspiration, then the Christian minister speaks by inspiration in the pulpit; then indeed, all Christians are inspired, for they have a promise of assistance according to exigency. What then, is Dr Dick's defence of inspiration, but an effort to retain the name, at the expence of surrendering the thing. Dr Dick's Bible is not the word of God. Many parts of it are the work of man, with slight assistance from God. Is this the treatise that has so long been considered as a standard on the subject of inspiration? Surely the Christian public are slightly acquainted with this important subject, else such a work could not meet their approbation. Can any Christian bear the idea, that the Bible has been composed by men, enjoying only a general assistance from God, according to exigency? If this is true, then why may not others allege, that as in their opinion there is no exigency for any thing of the nature of inspiration in the strict sense of the word, there is nothing of it to be found in the Scriptures. A mere invigoration of the memory and judgment, was all that was necessary for men to produce the Bible. How easy a thing it is to mislead the public! Let a Neologian declare, from a pulpit in Edinburgh or Glasgow, that the Scriptures are not inspired, and his blasphemy will shock all minds. But let an orthodox divine explain the word inspiration in a sense that equally denies the proper

idea contained in it, and it is likely he will be admired as a deep theologian, who has happily arrived at the philosophy of an abstruse question, and an able vindicator of *the plenary inspiration* of *the Holy Scriptures*. I call on Dr Dick to reconsider his concessions on this all-important subject, and to cease to rob us of the book of God. He has taken from us God's book, and we cannot be content, though he has left a good book in its stead.

"They had the Bible. Hast thou ever heard
Of such a book? The author God himself."—*Pollock*.

"From the preceding statement," says our author, "it appears, that we do not apply the term 'inspiration, in the same sense to the whole of 'Scripture." And why do you not, Dr Dick? What authority have you for giving two senses to the word in the same occurrence? A word may have two senses, or more, in different situations; but this makes the passage, 2 Tim. iii. 16. give two senses to the word in the same place. With respect to some things, it must be revelation; with respect to others, only assistance; and an assistance infinitely varied according to circumstances. Was ever any thing more arbitrary than this? The author speaks of partial inspiration as implying "a 'distinction perfectly arbitrary, having no founda-'tion on any thing said by the sacred writers them-'selves." But is it more arbitrary than his own distinction in this meaning of this word? Can any

distinction have less foundation in any thing said by the sacred writers themselves? Does he not give two senses to the same word in the same occurrence? Does he not give it a meaning which it never has—a meaning perfectly inconsistent with its true import?

This mode of defending a doctrine by a double sense of a word in the same place, is the perfection of the skill of the Jesuitical defenders of Popery. When an antagonist unskilled in their mode of fighting, comes forward with a muster of texts, that he expects from their clearness will utterly confound and silence, if they do not convince, is himself confounded, when he finds that all his proofs are at once both admitted and denied by the help of this mode of explanation. To overturn all the self-righteous refuges of superstition, he thunders out the words—"The blood of Jesus Christ 'cleanses from all sin," convinced that there is no way of escape. But with the greatest coolness it is promptly replied, "Very true; the Church of 'Rome never taught any other doctrine than this. 'The blood of Jesus Christ, and nothing but the 'blood of Jesus Christ, does indeed cleanse from 'all sin; that is, Christ's blood takes away the eter-'nal punishment of our sins; but there remains the 'temporal punishment due to our sins, which we 'must suffer for ourselves, either here or hereafter." And verily, if Dr Dick is justified in explaining the word inspiration in 2 Tim. iii. 16, in two senses,

the same liberty cannot be denied to the doctrines of Popery.

But let us hear the writer's reason for not giving this word the same sense with respect to all the inspired writings. " Because," says he, " the same ' degree of assistance was not necessary in the com- ' position of every part of it." Then the Bible is not the book of God, but a book composed by man, with less or more of God's assistance, according as it was needed. If it be the word of God, if every part of it can justly be said to be given by inspiration of God, the whole must, in the same sense, be God's. There is no more authority to give two senses to the word inspiration in the same place, than there is to give two senses to the word God, and to say, that 2 Tim. iii. 16, asserts that some of the Scriptures are a revelation from the true God, and that other parts of them have been inspired by the god of this world. A book composed by God's assistance, could not be said to be given by inspiration of God. Dr Dick's Sermons, I hope, are compositions of this kind; but, I dare say, he does not pretend to inspiration. This is deeply erroneous language, Dr Dick. This is a solution of a difficulty as to inspiration, that destroys inspiration itself. While it vindicates the name of inspiration, as applied to all the Scriptures; it not only expressly excludes much of them from proper inspiration, but lays a foundation for the denial of it as to all. The Bible is not a good book written by God's assistance; but is God's own book, of which he is the *very author*, in as true a sense, as Dr

Dick is the author of this Essay on Inspiration. Much of it, indeed, respects ordinary matters; but even this is his as truly, and as fully, as the rest. Though the writers might have related many things in their own language without God, yet as a matter of fact, they did not write any thing without him; for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of 'God." This is my polar star on this question. As long as my eye is upon it, I do not fear to steer my course with safety. By losing sight of this, Dr Dick has got himself entangled in the theories of human wisdom, those hallucinations that promise a refuge to the unwary mariner, but hide rocks and quicksands under a vapoury surface.

"In some parts," says Dr Dick, "if I may speak 'so, there is more of God than in others." Doubtless. But in what sense is this? A sense nothing to the purpose of your argument, Dr Dick. There is certainly more of God, in those passages that reveal the divine character, than in those parts that speak of temporal things. But this is not the question. If God is the author of every part of the Bible, there is no part of it, of which he can be said to be more the author than another. But let us hear the writer's own illustration. "When a 'prophet predicts the events of futurity, or an 'apostle makes known the mysteries of redemption, 'it is God alone who speaks; and the voice or the 'pen of a man, is merely the instrument employed 'for the communication of his will." Now this illustration is not at all warranted from the Scriptures. Man is a rational instrument in delivering

the doctrines of salvation, and speaks in his own proper person, using his own arguments and illustrations, as much as when he relates facts that occurred before his own eyes. Indeed, it is man that directly speaks, and it is only from Scripture testimony that we learn that the doctrines, arguments, illustrations and language of the apostle, are the doctrines, arguments, illustrations and language of God. And " when Moses relates the miracles of ' Egypt, and the journeys of the Israelites in the ' Wilderness, or the Evangelists relate the history ' of Christ," they speak only what God gave them, or in the words which he gave them, though " they tell nothing but what they formerly knew." Dr Dick says, that " without the assistance of the ' Spirit, they could not have told it so well." But this is giving up inspiration, and substituting assistance in its place. Without divine assistance a man cannot preach so well. But this is not inspiration. If, in such instances, it is lawful for Dr Dick to scoop out the meaning of the word, and substitute a fancy of his own in its place, others may with equal propriety allege that such assistance was all that was necessary to record the documents of our salvation. If such assistance is inspiration as to some things, why may it not be inspiration as to others? Inspiration was not given merely to enable the sacred writers to tell their story well, but that their narrative might be the true word of God. Dr Dick's Bible, then, is quite a different book from mine. My Bible is God's book, which God himself has made; yea, every part of which he has made.

How lamentable is it to find the writer of an essay long recognized as a standard on the subject of inspiration, avowing that much of his Bible is the work of man, assisted according to exigency by God! Dr Dick has written an Essay on the Inspiration of the Scriptures, in which he virtually gives up the inspiration of much of them. To speak of plenary inspiration with such views, is to hold the word and to renounce the thing signified by it.

" In some cases," says the Bishop of Lincoln, as quoted with approbation by this author, " in- ' spiration only produced correctness and accuracy ' in relating past occurrences, or in reciting the ' words of others." Now is this all that inspiration does in the cases alluded to? Do the narrators of sacred history select their facts, or recite the language of others without God? But even more than this, I affirm, is imported in inspiration, even in reporting that Judas hanged himself. The meaning expressed, and the expression itself, have God for their author, else it could not be said, " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," 2 Tim. iii. 16. is of more weight with me, than that of all the speculations of human wisdom.

It is obvious, that the Bishop of Lincoln speaks here of the inspiration of the writers of Scripture, whereas the question respects the inspiration of the Scriptures. The common confounding of these two things has produced much of that confusion in which the subject is involved, and has driven writers to unscriptural distinctions in the meaning of the word. The sacred writers had no need to be in-

spired with the knowledge of facts which they already knew, but to make their relations the word of God, they must all be given by his inspiration, both in matter and language. This distinction is confounded by Dr Dick. While his work is entitled an Essay on the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, he begins by defining inspiration, as it relates to the inspired writers. and not as it relates to the things written by them. "I define inspiration," says he, "to be an influence of the Holy Ghost 'on the understandings, imaginations, memories, and 'other mental powers of the sacred writers, by 'which they were qualified to communicate to the 'world the knowledge of the will of God." Now, if instead of giving a definition, independent of Scripture authority, he had simply referred to the passage 2 Tim. iii. 16, that asserts inspiration, and gives an exhibition and illustration of the meaning of the Greek word as used in the passage, he would necessarily have been led into the right path. For here inspiration respects the Scriptures; and all Scriptures is equally said to possess it. But inspiration as it respects inspired persons may be various in degree to any extent that may please God. This is one of the many instances, in which the worst effects proceed from considering questions with respect to divine truth in an abstract manner, without any reference to the passages on which they are founded. On this subject there was no need of a human definition of the term. It would have been much more useful to exhibit the meaning of the word with any illustration that might be afford-

ed by the use of it in Greek writers. The ὑπνοι θεοπνευστοι, or *inspired dreams* of the heathen would have given us a more precise idea of the meaning of the term, than the most accurate abstract definition. In treating of the inspiration of the Scriptures, there is no necessity to enter into discussions about the divine operation on the faculties of their mind. This is not the subject. On this there is nothing revealed, and all definitions with respect to this, must therefore be the work of fancy. That the Holy Ghost spake and wrote through man, is a fact attested by the Scriptures, but how he influenced their minds, we are not informed. It is not then to be expected that we are to obtain much light on the subject, from the definitions of divines. The only proper definition, is a definition of the word, that is, an explanation of the word as it is used in the language.

This writer does not expressly deny verbal inspiration in the fullest extent, but the theory which he favours does not require this; and with respect to some things, he considers that it does not exist. *Infallible direction* is what he pleads for on this point. Now direction is not inspiration, though it might equally secure a fair representation of truth. And I complain, that he does not rest verbal inspiration on its main evidence, 2 Tim. iii. 16. There are many other sound and substantial arguments, and these the author states in a very convincing manner. But the direct and main evidence, which applies to every case is 2 Tim. iii. 16., which I have not observed among the author's

proofs of verbal inspiration. " All Scripture is given ' by inspiration of God." The writing is the thing whose inspiration is asserted. It cannot then be a question whether words belong to a writing. It is by overlooking this and treating of inspiration as it respects the sacred writers that false theories have originated. It is this that has led the author to such concessions as this. " With respect to other ' passages of Scripture, and particularly those which ' treat of such subjects as might have been known ' without revelation, it is not necessary to main- ' tain, that the language was inspired precisely in ' the same sense as in those already considered." After what I have already said, it cannot be necessary to spend time in shewing, that if such things are inspired at all, they must be inspired precisely in the same sense with every thing else that is said to be inspired. What I would observe now is, that such assertions as this, result from holding the necessity of inspiration on general principles only, and not on the expressed testimony of the Scriptures themselves. As long as we believe verbal inspiration on the authority of its general necessity only, it is obvious that to this general necessity there may be exceptions. And here are the exceptions. There are some things that do not seem to need this verbal inspiration. But if we look to the testimony of Scripture, 2 Tim. iii. 16. we will find that it demands the same inspiration in every part of the word of God.

" We may conceive," says he, " the sacred wri- ' ters to have been permitted more freely to exer-

' cise their own faculties." 2 Tim. iii. 16., does not permit us, Dr Dick, to roam at large on this subject, and to indulge our own random conceptions. But the fullest inspiration by no means implies any constraint in the exercise of the faculties of the sacred writers. They were as free on the doctrine of atonement, as in historical facts. " The words," says he, " were not formally dictated any more ' than the sentiments." This virtually gives up the inspiration of such parts of Scripture both as to words and sentiments, and substitutes something else in its stead. We can know nothing of the process of inspiration on any subject. " But they seem- ' ed," says he, " to proceed like other historians ' and moralists, and to express themselves in their ' natural manner." They did so on the doctrines of salvation as well as in the relation of the most trivial facts. Paul used his natural manner in the Epistle to the Romans, as well as Luke in his account of Paul's shipwreck.

It would have been an essential advantage to this essay, had the author treated inspiration as a matter of revelation merely. This would not only have given a greater unity to the work, but would have led to a fuller exhibition of what the Scriptures actually teach on the subject. In exhibiting directly the meaning and bearings of all the passages that reveal any thing on this point, the full extent of verbal inspiration could not have lain hid; and a fuller scope would have been given for a reply to objections. In vindicating inspiration, there certainly was no more necessity for a vindication of

miracles, and the exhibition of the general evidence of the authenticity of the Scriptures, than there would have been, had the subject been the incarnation or the atonement. Inspiration is as much a matter of revelation, as justification by faith. Both stand equally on the authority of the Scriptures. In teaching and defending the doctrine of inspiration, then, the authenticity of the Scriptures as a revelation from God, should have been taken for granted; and the contest should not have been with Hume and Gibbon, but with Priestley and the evangelical theologians, who speak of partial inspiration. The authenticity of the Scriptures, and their inspiration, are quite different questions. Multitudes who receive the Scriptures as containing a revelation from God, deny their inspiration, or modify it, so as in effect to destroy it. With these solely, and not with deists, the battle of inspiration ought to be fought. It was not a little surprising then to me, to find a considerable portion of this Essay taken up with the infidel, and still more surprising to meet the following observation:—"Paul 'affirms, in the Second Epistle to Timothy, that '"all Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" 'but every person must be sensible, that this as-'sertion is not in itself a sufficient ground for be-'lieving the inspiration of the writings to which he 'refers." And what other ground can you have, Dr Dick, for believing inspiration? Is not the authority of Paul as fully able to establish inspiration, as to establish the doctrine of the Trinity? It is true, indeed, that the Scriptures themselves

must first be established; but this is equally true with respect to every other doctrine. Would any writer think it necessary in establishing the doctrine of salvation by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to vindicate miracles, and establish the authenticity of the Scriptures? Certainly not; because the people with whom he contends admit this. In like manner, those who deny or modify inspiration, admit the Scriptures as containing a revelation from God, and it is a waste of time to argue this point with them. True, indeed, the infidel denies inspiration, but he denies also the authenticity; and it is useless to vindicate the former till the latter is established. Indeed, there is no way of establishing inspiration, but by the Scriptures; and Scripture authority will not pass with the infidel. I am aware, that many arguments for inspiration may be founded on the authenticity, and that it is evident, that if the Scriptures are authentic, they must be inspired. But I do not blame the author for taking advantage of arguments of this kind. On the contrary, I fully approve of his conduct on this point. But he might have equally availed himself of all such arguments, taking the authenticity for granted. What I mean is, that a work on inspiration ought to have treated the subject as a matter of revelation, as much as a treatise on faith or redemption; and that by acting on another principle, the author has produced confusion in his work, and has unjustly degraded inspiration, as if it must be received on different grounds from those on which the other doctrines of revelation are

rested. The Scriptures are as much an ultimate authority on this question, as any other question of revealed truth. A very considerable proportion of this work is not at all on the subject of its title.

I cannot conclude my remarks without extracting an observation from the preface to this work, which appears to me true, striking, and important. "An attentive observer," says Dr Dick, "cannot 'have failed to remark a very striking peculiarity 'of the present times. It is the influence of the 'pinciples of infidelity upon many professors of the 'Christian religion. The bold opposition made to 'some doctrines of revelation, renders them asham-'ed or afraid to own them, without at least such 'qualification and changes, as shall smooth their 'asperities and lessen their apparent incredibility. 'In some instances such concessions are made, as 'amount to a complete surrender of the point in de-'bate. The inspiration of the Scriptures is an 'article of our faith, against which infidels have 'directed all the arguments which their ingenuity 'could furnish, and all the abuse which their malice 'could invent. What is the consequence? Many 'professed champions of Christianity seem to have 'concluded that the article is not tenable, because 'it has been previously assailed; and accordingly, 'they have abandoned it wholly, or in part to the 'enemy. Few writers, indeed, who now under-'take to defend the cause of revelation, hold the 'plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. That idea 'has become unfashionable; it is classed with 'other opinions of our fathers, which are ex-

'ploded as the dreams of enthusiasm and superstitious credulity; and he only is supposed to entertain rational sentiments on the subject, who looks upon the Sacred Books as partly human and partly divine; as a heterogeneous compound of the oracles of God, and the stories and sentiments of men." "The spirit of infidelity is working among Christians themselves."

The application of this to the works which I have reviewed, is perfectly obvious. Some evangelical divines of the present day, unlike their uncompromising predecessors, have endeavoured to reconcile the favour of the world with the cross of Christ. By the perfection of their wisdom, they think they have succeeded in finding a way to declare the counsel of God substantially, without exciting the mortal enmity of the world, as constantly happened from the less skilful address of Christ and the Apostles. If the gospel cannot conquer the obstinacy of the infidel, skilful management, it is thought, may make them peaceable neighbours. It was quite imprudent then, in the Apostle to act on the principle of not "shunning to declare the 'whole counsel of God." Had he acted towards the philosophers of his day, as some evangelical divines have towards the learned Neologians, instead of being accounted a "babbler," he might have been treated as *the learned and liberal introducer of a new science.* And if, instead of denouncing all the opposers of his doctrines as the enemies of God, he had proposed his scheme as deep speculations to exercise tho igenuity of the

wise, he might have been hailed as another Socrates.

While I gladly acquit Dr Dick of this compromising spirit, I must charge his Essay with the same radical errors as the other systems. He admits the same mischievous distinctions, that are only another name for denying proper inspiration to a great part of the Scriptures. The inspiration which he avows, has "such qualifications and 'changes, as smooth its asperities, and lessen its 'apparent incredibility." In some instances, such concessions are made, as amount to a complete surrender of the point in debate. "Inspiration he 'has abandoned in part to the enemy." He indeed undertakes to defend "the plenary inspiration 'of the Scriptures;" but it is only *the name* which he extends in a plenary manner. He concedes as explicitly as any other writer, that the word does not apply in the same sense to all parts of the Scriptures, which is virtually to deny the inspiration of such parts. He does not indeed, like Mr Daniel Wilson, "look upon the Sacred Books as partly 'human, and partly divine;" but I was surprised to find in reading Dr Dick's Essay, that Mr Daniel Wilson was not the first who speaks of *nature ending, and revelation beginning*, with reference to inspiration. When I first found this distinction in Mr Wilson's Lectures, I little expected to discover afterwards, that the original honours of this infidel phraseology, belong to the Essay on the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. If Dr Dick is justified in speaking of nature, as going a certain length

in the composition of the Bible, I cannot see why he should condemn those who "look upon the 'Sacred Books as partly human and partly divine."

In the part which I have taken in the controversy on Inspiration, it has given me great pain that I have been obliged to contend with the real friends of the Lord Jesus, on a subject in which all believers might be expected to harmonize. From various circumstances, it is not surprising, that in many things there should be difference of views among Christians. But what can be the temptation to lower the character of the word of God? Might it not be expected, that all would unite in exalting the perfection of our common standard? What is it that operates in the mind of a believer to induce him to toil in degrading the oracles of heaven?

In the investigation of all subjects connected with revelation, though I do not overlook the importance of bringing the Christian public along with me, yet my first study is accurately to ascertain and exhibit the mind of God. I never think of measuring my conclusions with the limits assigned by the learned. When I see truth, I am not ashamed to avow it, nor afraid to defend it. And the cross of adhering to it, few have felt more heavy, or have greater temptations to throw it away. Yet while I spare not error, my love to those in error is not abated. My brotherhood ex-

tends not to party, but to the whole household of God. While I labour to unfold truth, I presume not to dictate; and though a Christian should reject every thing which I hold, but the way of salvation through faith, in the righteousness of the Son of God, I will receive him, as I trust God for Christ's sake, has received me.

In reasoning from Scripture on this subject of inspiration, and on every other, it is of great importance that we never lose sight of the tremendous responsibility which we incur. It is no light matter to attempt to influence the belief of the people of God, with respect to subjects on which he has expressed his mind. It is a fearful thing to labour to misrepresent the divine testimony in any matter. It is bad to err, but it is worse to exert ourselves to pervert others. On the other hand, it is a delightful idea, to be in any measure instrumental in leading forward the minds of the Lord's people, to a more full understanding of his word. Nothing but the conviction that I am pleading the cause of God and truth, could console me in opposing so many distinguished writers on the nature of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. I rise from my labours, myself much edified and confirmed, and with an increasing zeal to convince all my fellow christians. And why should I not hope that the most exalted views of the word of God shall prevail? It is not a party question. Many of all parties seem inadequately acquainted with the subject. But there is no obstacle to prevent any from embracing the most

honourable views of the oracles of God. Though, therefore, the children of the Most High may unhappily continue to differ in many things; in this one thing all may be expected to unite. Let us all celebrate the perfections of our common standard—the Bible.

Printed by James Colston, East Rose Street, Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

BS480 .C32
The theories of inspiration of the Rev.
Princeton Theological Seminary–Speer Library
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